

WIRE

THE WIRE ADVENTURES IN MODERN MUSIC
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TOM WAITS

The great deceiver

Arthur Lee William Parker Lou Harrison

Leif Elggren & CM Von Hausswolff To Live & Shave In LA Boom Bip Tchad Blake Kevin Drumm Peter Hammill Sonic Process Festival round-up: Sonar, Mutek, LMC

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Editor's Idea

This issue is full of tricksters, illusionists, and – in the very best sense – con artists. Illusionists force the suspension of disbelief that makes art and music sail so close to the parallel activity of magic, and the history of music is filled with practitioners whose business involves a fair share of conjuring. For Swedish artists Leif Elggren & Carl Michael Von Hausswolff (featured on page 24), the world – as represented to them through such filters as the media – is a mirage-like construction held together by fragile knots: the symbolism of hereditary power and the totems of a monarchic state. Their most well known work is the Kingdoms of Elgaland-Vargaland, a self-declared nation which annexes borderlines and areas of the physical and virtual world still unclaimed by the world's existing countries. It is not an isolated manoeuvre. Laibach's NSK State is another autonomous zone where irony and political ambiguity run riot. Similarly, a few years ago a consortium seized an unused oil rig in the North Sea and named it Sealand, creating a data haven and 'country' requiring application for citizenship, and with its own king and queen.

In time, perhaps, such ventures as these may come to be viewed as some of the most significant artistic gestures since Duchamp's R Mutt urinal. In the light of the increasingly complex conflicts over territorial governance, sociogeographical politics and massive population displacements due to ecological and manmade disaster, the deterritorialisation and 'virtual state' which is the focus of so much cultural discourse, particularly around contemporary electronic music, may be about to receive a harsh kick in the pants.

Tom Waits, as Phil Freeman points out in his extensive profile, has remained a supreme master of deception, to the point where the 'Tom Waits' familiar as the barfly persona of his early Asylum years and various movie cameos has become difficult to unpick from the family man who lives a relatively quiet life in California (on a recent appearance on the David Letterman show, he said that he gets recognised at the local garbage dump, but never when he takes his kids out shopping). Waits's extensive theatrical work in association with his wife and writing partner Kathleen Brennan has reached fruition with his latest production with Robert Wilson: a version of the 1843 expressionist drama *Woyzeck*, which forms the basis of his recent *Blood Money* CD.

For veteran free jazz bassist William Parker, the real world is explicitly an illusionary place. His 'tone world' is an imaginary dimension into which he can slip sideways at the vibration of a bass note. Retreat from reality, or a reasonable strategy for dealing with a wider world that refuses to take you seriously either as a human being or as a creative artist? Just about all the music you'll read about in this magazine is – using a myriad of different strategies – struggling to escape the bland restrictions and simplifications imposed by the world of common sense, of consensus value. And so, with nothing up our left sleeve, nothing up our right, we lift the handkerchief on this month's hatful of rabbits and doves.

ROB YOUNG

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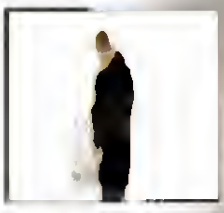
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Keiji Haino

Let him eat cake...

It's interesting to see that Keiji Haino (*The Wire* 221) is a non-smoking teetotal vegetarian. No doubt he feels this is beneficial to his art. It's a pity his abstinence doesn't extend to cream cakes.
John Kilbride Glasgow, UK

... if he can take it

Keiji Haino's cancellation of the Fushitsusha gig at Le Weekend in Stirling is astounding. As I very nearly went up there to see the world's greatest axe-throttler, I'm pleased that my last minute decision against going was made, even though his solo set sounded amazing. I guess many others who did go are well pissed off. What possessed Haino to eat cream cakes in *Scotland*? (Deep-fried too?) Couldn't his advisors keep him off them? His slight frame clearly couldn't take the sucrose overload. You muppet, Haino-san.
Dai Lewis London, UK

Haino heretic

OK, so Keiji Haino: interesting figure; obviously a very sincere artist; so worshipped by your writers that if *The Wire* ever decided to go into competition with the Catholic Church he would surely be their first saint (unless the Blessed Derek Bailey beat him to it). And then there's that 100-plus discography – have you ever noticed that, nowadays, in the commercial end of music production, artists produce one album every three years while in *The Wire*'s cosy little ghetto they produce ten albums of bellybutton fluff every year? (And doesn't the ideal situation lie somewhere between these two extremes?) But all I want to say about Mr Haino is why has nothing I've ever heard from him ever been any good? Anyone agree with me?
Keith Coyne London, UK

A Nurse maid's tale

Satori in paper! Great to see the Nurse With Wound Primer (*The Wire* 221) finally surface and be fed those little bits of information that add to the overall sensation of being a 'Nurse follower', in particular the often overlooked story of John Fothergill and Heman Pathak from the early years. Apparently, The Lemon Kittens 'fell out' with Fothergill as a result of his infatuation with Danielle Dax. Then again, who can blame the man?

Simon Fisher Turner's Invisible Jukebox was also a good read: great to see someone in the pages of *The Wire* raving about the late, great Mick Ronson, who could send a shiver up and down your spine via two notes on an electric guitar. A marvellous issue.
Tim Jones Manchester, UK

Word up

Immense thanks to Hua Hsu and *The Wire* for the excellent and long overdue article on Skiz Fernando's Wordsound label (*The Wire* 221). I have followed and supported Wordsound from its humble origins and have watched it blossom into an undrainable pool of creative energy. Aside from meeting Skiz at a Praxis show in NYC, I have spoken via email with him on numerous occasions. There is no doubt in my mind that he is the real deal and that he perfectly embodies the independent spirit and aesthetic. In no way do I mean to imply that he represents the indie-snob, "my shit is too dope for you" stance that is becoming all to common in underground HipHop. I think Skiz would welcome success on a large level, but it would have to come without compromise to the art.

An overview of the Wordsound catalogue, especially for the uninitiated, might bring some unexpected surprises. The label has worked with and put out albums by some of the most influential and respected artists on the planet: Bill Laswell, Prince Paul, Mick Harris, Kevin Martin, Style Scott... Love them or hate them, their importance cannot be denied. Skiz has chosen to work with these people for the most pure of reasons: the love of the art. I know that sounds like a cliche in these times, but never has there been a truer example of this simple philosophy. It seems criminal to me that this man has to bag groceries to make ends meet. Not because he is a Harvard grad (I know plenty of Harvard grads who bag groceries), not because he runs his own label (I definitely know some label owners who do this and much tougher stuff), it's because he has continued, in the face of extreme adversity, to put out quality music of substance that he believes in. Never trying to appease outside forces who wish to turn music into an impenetrable wave of 'bling-bling'. My hat goes off to Skiz and the Wordsound crew for continuing the struggle. You have at least one fan for life, guaranteed. By the way, if you are planning on buying some Wordsound music, just some advice: make sure you have a subwoofer!
Marcus Phillips via email

Cow's hearse out of a pig's ear

I was reading Soundcheck (*The Wire* 221), and I saw Brian Marley's review of the Staalplaat CD series Mort Aux Vaches, which he translates as "Death to cows – sacred, presumably". Well, young people must be excused for not knowing. I'm sort of old (my very first rock concert was The Rolling Stones in Rome, February 1967 when Brian Jones was still alive and kicking), so I remember.

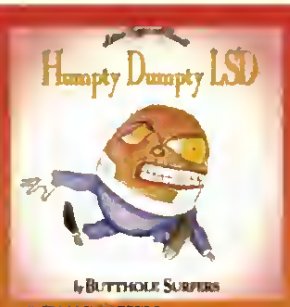
'Mort aux vaches' was a slogan during the famous Parisian May 1968. The 'Vaches' weren't real cows, of course, but the police. So it should be translated as 'Death to the police', or 'Death to policemen'. Having been in a number of demonstrations and riots myself and having run away from their sticks and guns, I cannot but agree. Mort aux vaches!!!
Fulvio Savagnone Rome, Italy

Without wishing to sound like a smartarse, I suspect that Staalplaat took the name for their *Mort Aux Vaches* series of releases (as reviewed in Soundcheck, *The Wire* 221) from the initials 'MAV' which used to be carved on the walls of French prison cells and was a common tattoo on the hands of prisoners. Apparently, this translates as 'Death to the cops'. I came across it in Jean Genet's *Miracle Of The Rose* (I think), a few years ago. Right on, brothers!
Nigel Bryant London, UK

Something stupid

During the editing process a sentence in my article on The People Band (*The Wire* 220) got knocked out of shape and consequently gives the impression that bassist Terry Holman was also a session guitarist who played with Frank Sinatra. This was not the case. The original sentence read: "Terry Holman relates that at the recording date an intrigued session guitarist, who

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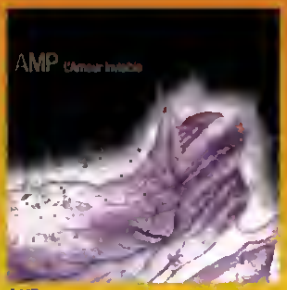
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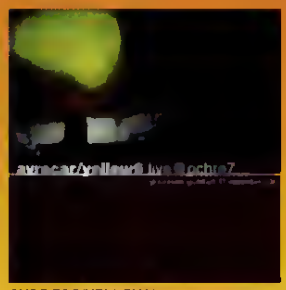
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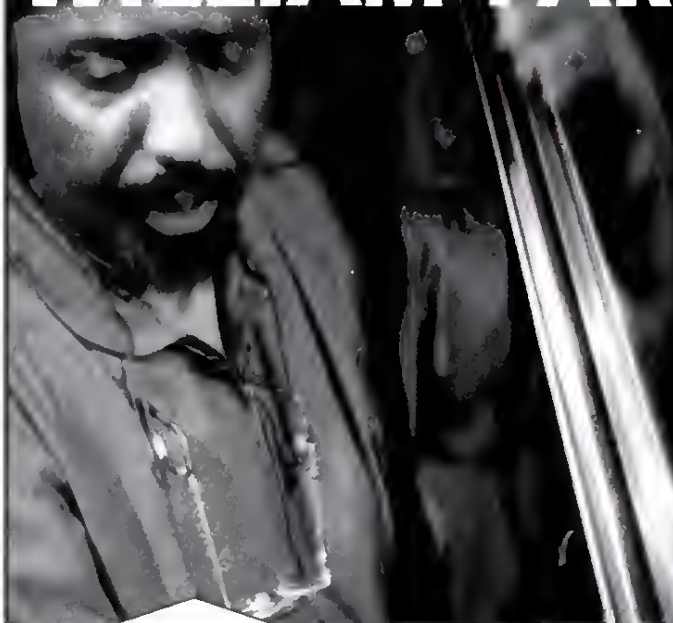


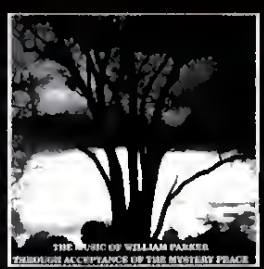
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Letters

had been rehearsing to back Frank Sinatra, popped in and was allowed his moment on the album." Holman couldn't remember the guitarist's name.
Julien Cowley via email

Born free

Just wanted to say a thank you to Peter Shapiro for the Invisible Jukebox feature that he did with Super_Collider in *The Wire* 220. It was great fun to do, and a good excuse to listen to some ace music. Still, I felt like writing in over just one point though: in the introductory bio of the piece, Shapiro states that I spent my youth "on the run" from Pinochet's regime in Chile. As a mark of respect for the suffering of genuine Chilean political exiles, many of whom really did spend many terrible years hiding from Pinochet's regime, I would like to let readers know that although I was born in Chile, I have never claimed to have been on the run, hiding out from motel to motel. In fact I had a pretty normal upbringing in the Midlands, which has always been a lively multicultural area of Britain. Anyway, thanks again for the piece and the groovy photos.
Cristian Vogel via email

Nobody's perfect

In his Kjetil D Brandsdal Bite (*The Wire* 220), Byron Coley says, "Norway has never ranked highly as a musical hot seat. Sure history has witnessed... Black Metal improvisors Abruptum...". Thing is, Abruptum are Swedish. There are so many Norwegian Black Metal pioneers you could have mentioned that I had to send you this email even if Abruptum were from Norway.
Jorge via email

Mexican standoff

Because you folks are so generally on target it's especially wince-worthy when your reviewers blow it, and such is certainly the case with Philip Clark's cloth-eared and shallow response to Kronos Quartet's new CD *Nuevo* (Modern Composition, *The Wire* 220). I fail to see how there's anything "corporate" about a rendition of "Perfidia" featuring a one armed street musician playing a palm leaf with his mouth, and let's not even get into Clark's absurd scolding of Kronos for recording a rendition of Esquivel's "MiniSkirt" because it is, apparently, also the theme to UK journo Louis Theroux's TV programme (which I doubt that Kronos have even seen). Surely we aren't granting Mr Theroux rights in perpetuity to the work of Esquivel? Regardless, it's a drag to read someone spitefully trashing a record which I, and judging from the response I get when I play this on the radio, many other listeners recognise for the moving, ambitious, and most of all, fresh take on Mexican music that it is. Perhaps Mr Clark should watch a little less TV.
Drew Daniel San Francisco, USA

Uneasy truce

I can quite understand that, after wading through as many arrogant CD blurbs as Philip Clark must do, he is sensitive to overstated claims of artistic greatness. However, in his review of the CD Marco Trevisani and I have just released on Sargasso (Modern Composition, *The Wire* 220), he misunderstood at least the intention of the text. He correctly quotes from the liner notes that the music isn't "classical, nor computer music, jazz, electronica, Cuban, World... *Apagon* is all of these things and more", but sees us therefore as claiming that our music is more, ie greater, than those genres ("While the music might draw on all the above, it isn't 'more' than these traditions"). What it meant was that the music has more influences than those mentioned – Sicilian folk song for example – and sits in none of those categones comfortably. Now that I read the text with his eyes, I understand the misunderstanding. Being similarly sensitive to the 'me me me madness' of the music world, I just wanted to clarify our claims. We don't see ourselves as bigger, better, faster; rather we're simply conscious of the many faces of our musical heritage. I regret that people reading this review will have a false idea of the size of our egos. But thanks for reviewing the CD and I'm glad Clark enjoyed it.
Michael Edwards Salzburg, Austna

Life's no picnic

It's been a long time since I've read something as interesting as the story of the strange Jewelled Antler Collective (*The Wire* 219). It really grabbed me. It seems like they come from another time: they have fun recording their music and this is not because they're making bubblegum pop shit. With this idea they kicked the ass of Vincent Gallo and all those self-proclaimed 'serious artists'. When they say that recording music has to be as eerie as having a picnic – that really blew my mind. That's the kind of writing you won't find anywhere else but in *The Wire*.
Roberto via email

Killjoy was here

I've been disappointed by *The Wire* over the last 12 months. On matters jazzy, it reads increasingly like the specialist magazines of circa 1970 that majored on retrospection (Ellingtonia, etc) in the face of unpalatable 'modern' developments. With some irony, it's now the sound and fury guys that are getting a nostalgic and overly sympathetic treatment. Seems we're all getting on a bit, aren't we?

David Keenan's Primer on ecstatic jazz (*The Wire* 208) set the off-tone with a familiar, cliche-ridden pick at the coals of this brief and brotherly fad. A thorough view of the relevant careers would actually reveal a mass of serial, inconclusive dabbling and the most innovative of voices doing (even) their best stuff to death. Val Wilmer's *As Serious As Your Life*, a standard work at *Wire* HQ, is barely adequate in this context, being a sanctified and ancient bit of PR that trades any information on drink and drug abuse for right-on fluff about conspiracies, sincerity, not making money and women.

Next, Thurston Moore et al, who contrive a link between amateur-hour rock and the last heavy names in jazz. This is OK until one listens to the records, which are mainly dnppy and unconvincing. I can only think your habitual surrender in this area stems from personal affinities forged in the early 80s, a pitiful era that birthed the pale-faced and execrable naff zone of 'punk-jazz'.

Frankly, the attempt at shaping another fashion cycle for the (supposedly) angry or spiritually charged is boring me to shit. It might impress newer readers and attract advertising, but some of us already know what's been "out there" for 40 years and can reasonably suggest, for example, that Sam Rivers is a decent tenor, but rarely a great one. Or that David S Ware is perhaps the Wynton Marsalis of free jazz.

Regarding improvisation, *The Wire*'s fix on a radical 1967-69 suggests yet more commercially useful scene-setting for a dubious gallery of European wacksters whose main attributes are that they live longer and are at the end of a tube or EasyJet fare. I'd like to see all these associations buried, along with feature articles on the grand old farts of the British retro-garde, bursary-buggered spontaneous compositors and anyone or thing that's had to be 'curated'. And if that leaves the odd page completely blank, then fair enough. Call it art, man, and infinitely preferable to the awful Joëlle Léandre telling Coltrane and the boys what tradition they were really playing in.
Stuart Kitching via email

Corrections

issue 221 In the Nurse With Wound Primer, the Gnostic text *The Thunder: Perfect Mind* was referred to as medieval. In fact it was discovered in 1947 and currently presumed to date from the third or fourth century.
issue 220 The Directory ran the wrong label details for Kiyoshi Mizutani's *Yokosawa-iri* CD, reviewed in Outer Limits. The correct details are CMR, 28A Wellpark Ave, Grey Lynn, Auckland, New Zealand
mail@cmr.co.nz www.cmr.co.nz

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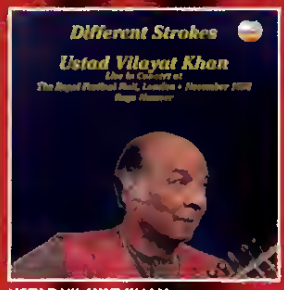
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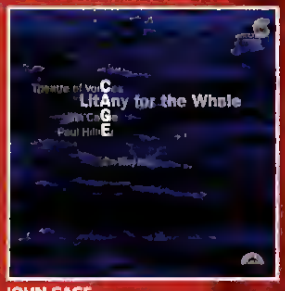
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Bitstream

News and more from under the radar. Compiled by The Trawler



UCLA bound: Jeck's deck

Next year's Los Angeles leg of **All Tomorrow's Parties**, which takes place at UCLA in June, will be curated by Matt Groening, the creator of *The Simpsons* and *Work Is Hell*. He may be the first non-musician to curate the festival, but Groening used to be a rock critic before animation started paying the bills, championing people like Captain Beefheart, Frank Zappa, Diamanda Galas, Pere Ubu and The Residents >> This November, UCLA will also be hosting **Tumament**, a two-day turntablist extravaganza. The festival will take in most facets of gramophone grappling, and will include performances or installations from Kool Herc, Kid Koala, The Haters, DJ Faust and Shortee, Boyd Rice, Philip Jeck, Grand Wizzard Theodore, John Oswald, DXT, Project Dark, Extended Organ (Tom Recchion, Joe Potts, Paul McCarthy and Fredrik Nilsen) and many more. Point your browser to www.turnament.com for schedule and tickets >> **Earle Brown**, one of the major figures of the American avant garde, died on 2 July at his home in suburban New York after a long illness. After contributing to John Cage's *Project For Music For Magnetic* Tape in 1953, Brown became a member of the fabled New York School. His compositions were influenced by the mobile sculptures of Alexander Calder, and he became one of the leading exponents of indeterminacy, particularly with his 'time-notation' works where the pitch was written in traditional notation but the duration was left up to the players. He will perhaps be best remembered, however, for influencing the work of Gyorgy Ligeti and Krzysztof Penderecki and for curating the pioneering Time-Mainstream series of recordings by 49 composers including Stockhausen, Nono, Mauricio Kagel, Giacinto Scelsi and Pierre Boulez >> As part of London's Mayor's Thames Festival, *The Wire* contributor David Toop's **Siren Space** will be performed on 15 September. The focus of the piece is the sound of the tugboat, and will feature a vernacular history of the Thames, plus both electronic and acoustic sound, including saxophonist Lol Coxhill duetting with tugboats from a perch on Hungerford Bridge >> ***Downtown 81***, a film about the New York art scene in the early 80s which was unearthed last year, has just been released on video. The film was directed by Edo Bertoglio, with a script by Glenn O'Brien and starred Jean Michel Basquiat, Debbie Harry, August Darnell, John Lurie and Maripol. The soundtrack, featuring Basquiat's group Gray, Suicide, Liquid Liquid, DNA, James White & The Blacks, Lydia Lunch, Kid Creole & The Coconuts and Rammellzee, is available on EMI >> Due to severe governmental budget cuts, Berlin's **Podewil** art space has had its operating budget slashed. The educational wing of Berlin's museums are also being forced to move their offices into Podewil, meaning that the majority of the artists will lose their rehearsal and studio spaces. The administration has instituted a campaign called Podewil Rules in an effort to get the German Senate to rescind its financial decisions. More information is available online at www.podewil.de >> **Stanton**, every DJ's favourite cartridge manufacturer, has probably further endeared themselves to the world's record spinning fraternity with the commercial release of Final Scratch for Windows (a Mac version is due soon). Through specially encoded vinyl records, Final Scratch allows you to scratch, slip cue and needle drop sound files such as MP3s, .wav and .aiffs as you would any regular vinyl 12". Is this is the end of the lathe cut, acetate and dubplate? Maybe not: it retails for $799 >> **The Second World Conference on Music and Censorship** takes place between 28-29 September in Copenhagen. The programme includes sessions covering censorship in Israel, Palestine, Afghanistan, South Africa, Nigeria and Florida, plus debates about national identity, the limits of free expression and logic of censorship. More information is available online at www.freemuse.org/2wcprog.html >> Record collectors saddened by the recent closure of London's **Ray's Jazz Shop** may have reason to rejoice. Ray's will be reincarnated inside Foyles bookshop on Charing Cross Road as a jazz shop/cafe. It will open in the autumn >> As if the recently unearthed treasures from Rocket From The Tombs, The Electric Eels and The Pagans weren't enough Rust Belt rock for you, along comes an extended reissue of **The Styrenes**' *It's Artastic* called *It's Still Artastic* (ROIR). All your favourite Cleveland punk classics are here – "Drano In Your Veins", "Jaguar Ride", "Radial Arm Saws" – plus ten new songs and two new versions. It should be out by the time you read this >> **The 21st Century Schizoid Band** is an amalgamation of early King Crimson members – Michael and Peter Giles, Ian McDonald and Mel Collins, plus, er, Jakko Jakszyk from Level 42 – who will tour the UK in September playing material from *The Court Of The Crimson King* and *The Wake Of Poseidon* >> Locust Music, the label that has released CDs by Henry Flynt, Sun City Girls and Christof Migone, is looking for submissions for its **Location Sound Series**. The first instalment will be called *Met Life* and contributors are asked to field record a sound event in an urban environment of between 15-24 minutes, and then record a response to that event. There are no stylistic constraints. The results will be released as a 12 volume series. Go to www.locustmusic.com for more information >> *The Wire* contributor Marcus Boon's tribute to **Pandit Pran Nath** is now online at www.hungryghost.net. The site includes essays on Nath by Boon, Henry Flynt and Joan Allekotte, plus interviews with Jon Hassell and Charlemagne Palestine and loads of photos >> That old joke about people with orthodontics has come one step closer to reality with a **tooth implant** currently on exhibit at the Science Museum in London. Designed by Jimmy Loizeau and James Auger, the implant (a wireless receiver and a micro-vibration device) can receive digital radio and mobile phone signals. The sound reception is discreet because the signal is transferred to the inner ear via 'bone resonance'. It may sound a bit like aliens implanting chips in the back of your head, but at least you'll never have to hear "La Cucaracha" on the Tube again. □

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One book
My childhood scrapbook/photo album
Three visitors
My mom, my brother Rob and my boyfriend
Last meal
Ethiopian food from the Red Sea and then a song or two with Rod Dibble at the Alley (he does an awesome South Pacific medley, and then, of course, "Memory" from *Cats* with Blevin Blechdom)
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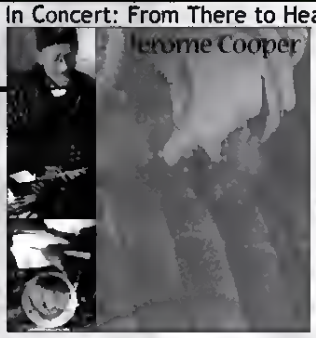
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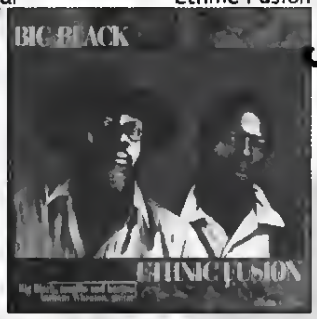
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'Boom bip': I don't know how many times that phrase has been used in a record review. You can find it all over music writing, wherever there are writers grasping to reconcile the broken beat with the spoken word and looking for the onomatopoeic encapsulation of HipHop's pulse: the kickdrum downbeat and the snarecrack response.

And now some cat from Cincinnati has adopted the phrase as his own moniker: Bryan Hollon, collaborator with DJ Dsins and Anticon's DoseDne, tinkerer behind several breaks collections and now proud papa of his own solo album, *Seed To Sun*. There are a few ironies behind the appropriation, though. First of all, Boom Bip's productions don't rely that heavily on the rhythmic conceit in question. Hardly a Jay Dilla or a DJ Premier stomping on the ones and threes like a swaggering backroads sheriff of the rimshot riff, Boom Bip weaves in and around the one, hopped up on jazz and folky fluids. His beats roll with the seasick swells of a cough syrup buzz, not the cool certainty of the gin 'n' juice nod. Secondly, the kid doesn't even call himself HipHop, despite his rep as a selector, the DJ tools on his discography or his patch of turf in Backpacker County – a promising little corner of the American underground, a mildly gentrified, boho community on the edge of the state of HipHop, where the real estate is appreciating rapidly.

"I don't consider myself a HipHop artist, I really don't," says Hollon without hesitation when I ask him about his role in an increasingly fractured culture. And why should he? *Seed To Sun* is one of those 'everything and nothing' records: an expansive amalgam of radically rearranged beats, unplaceable samples and barely-there references to everyone from New Order to Fairport Convention to ragtime. Not that the album could exist without New York's most famous export; Hollon's fondness for unspooling ribbons of kickdrum and snare suggest a debt to DJ Shadow, and DoseOne's two guest spots qualify at least nominally as 'rap music'. But then again, his synthetic pastoralisms fall in with Boards Of Canada's wistful vistas, and his fucked up noise folk runs alongside Radiohead's meltdown rock.

"It's one of those love/hate things," Hollon continues. "I want to go way beyond HipHop. I've felt for years that HipHop has been really stale, really boring, and I don't listen to it much any more. It really needs some fresh air breathed into it. But when you start breathing fresh air into something, and a lot of different sounds are coming from a certain genre, you're pushing the envelope, but you don't know when you cross over into another genre."

That characterisation, of course, could apply to any number of 'abstract' artists mutating HipHop's main musical elements – beats and rhymes – into less immediately recognisable strains of the virus. It's especially apt concerning *Circle*, Boom Bip's collaboration with DoseDne, the MC-cum-spoken word artist from Oakland's Anticon collective, a nasal voiced auctioneer best known for his work as part of cLOUDDEAD. Namechecked by no less than that organ of all that's fit to print, the *New York Times* (so much for backpacker obscurity!), the album was one of the first releases to bring aboveground attention to Mush Records, prefiguring cLOUDDEAD's unlikely popularity. *The Wire*'s Peter Shapiro, reviewing the record's European release on Big Dada, said that it "might be the best, and certainly most challenging, document to have emerged from HipHop's savant garde".

But *Circle* – which received a live airing on the recent Mush tour, with DoseDne on the mic and Boom Bip on turntable, laptop and theremin offering reworked versions of the tracks – had very different origins from *Seed To Sun*, which Hollon put together in about eight months in his basement studio. "*Circle* is definitely a partnership between two people," says Hollon. "It's very equally divided between the two of us, while the new album is all me. [On *Circle*] I would start a beat and DoseDne would find a poem that related, and then we'd go back, and I'd edit according to the lyrics, while he would change certain lyrics according to the beat, and we'd develop it that way. As far as the sound of it, *Circle* is a lot more stripped down, it's a lot more sample- and loop-based music; whereas on the new record, there are very few samples." Indeed, most of the instrumentation Hollon has played himself, with the exception of the upright bass parts – which he wrote himself on a Fender, then brought in a friend to record on a proper acoustic instrument. "With *Circle*, I would start a beat and let the lyrics finish it for me, whereas with this new album it was, How could I make a song that stands alone, that's recognised as being a piece of music, and not a *beat*? I'm striving to do something that will establish me more as a musician than as a beatmaker."

But even here, the questions of tradition and definition are never clear, a point that Hollon readily acknowledges. "I think that the way I make my music, some people would call it a HipHop foundation – it's beat driven, it's around 90 bpm, and a lot of people think that because it's beat driven it's HipHop. But really it's more electronic than HipHop. With HipHop I think of MCs, I think of attitude..."

"Do I want to keep my foot in that," he continues, "and have the credibility of HipHop kids appreciating what I'm doing? Absolutely. I'd love to have them recognising that there are some influences from HipHop used in the music I'm making, but it's not just HipHop. In fact if someone could come up with a better term I'd kiss 'em on the lips. ProgHop?" he ventures, thinking for a moment, then trails off into laughter. "No, no, I don't want that." □ *Boom Bip & DoseDne's Circle is out on Mush and Leaf. Seed To Sun will be released in September on Mush and Lex*



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TO LIVE AND SHAVE IN LA

WIGGED OUT. BY DAVID KEENAN

Wipe that smile off your face: Tom Smith

Applying the maxim 'the more exalted one's intent, the more insipid the name', Tom Smith birthed the infernal anti-concept of his concrète noise outfit and christened it To Live And Shave In LA while thumbing through the rental options in a porn shop. "As to a thumbprint: dub, always," Smith states. "I was jolted into consciousness in 1976 by Lee Perry's *Super Ape*. After picking myself off the floor I knew that I'd heard the clarion; action was inevitable, my fate sealed. Music should ideally be entropic, should move in all dimensions and spatial configurations and it should fucking kick ass while doing so. I reckon you can call what I do white trash electroacoustics if you prefer to titillate, but for me it's simple. I'm a purveyor of organic folk, a product of environment, a fusion of innate – and perhaps largely wasted – intellect and Southern dyspeptic aesthetics. I'm a very happy guy."

On TLASILA's current and final release, *The Wigmaker In Eighteenth Century Williamsburg*, Smith takes his idea of multidirectional sound in space to its logical extreme. Five years in the making, it's an ambitious marriage of ass-shaking rock dynamics, hard disk manipulation, 'sound on sound' concrète architecture and industrial strength electronics. As a 'noise' record, it's much more advanced and intellectually savage in compositional terms than most recent noise releases. "I have no time for pussyclot noise and glitchcore horseshit," he spits. "No patience for misreadings of Deleuze, Virilio and Derrida. No faux academic bores. No beards. No Morton Feldman, except when played at an inappropriate – jacked-up – volume. No lathe-cut wax cylinder CD-R Tandy C45 fucking losers, at least those who totemise such tools as signifiers of unalloyed intent. Certainly no reggae. The real avant garde is smiling."

Smith has been grinning his ass off since the early 80s when he co-founded the little known Boat Of, a trio that at one point included a young Michael Stipe. "It's pretty hard to describe our sound back then," he shrugs modestly. "If you can conjure an image of guitars played through tinny, crackling drive-in loudspeakers, swooping, absurdly overdriven bass lines, re-edited Scientist dubs and Enjoy/Sugarhill loops used as rhythm tracks with exceedingly sarcastic, wilfully cryptic vocals, you might not be too far afield."

After Boat Of's eventual demise, he rerouted his form-destroying affinities through various projects, playing in an early incarnation of New York scum rock outfit Pussy Galore, before getting closer to his vision of total music with Peach Of Immortality, who combined aggressive free improvisation with a taste for plundering the back catalogues of The Fall and various Death Metal losers. Although evidence of their transcendental power is thin on the ground – 1985's *Talking Heads 77* and 86's *'Jehovah' My Black Ass – REM Is Air Supply!* being their only 'official' releases – Smith remains evangelical about their brief and bloodied career. "When this incarnation was firing on what passed for all cylinders, Jesus, we were truly demonic," he trumpets. "And with allowances for humility, discretion and in deference to the muzak of Xenakis, Luigi Nono, Bartók and Judas Priest, in our cups, we had no peers. Unfortunately, we were so often fucked up that many of our performances took on a ghoulish, unintentionally comic aspect. We sucked as frequently as we soared. My brain chemistry was so significantly altered that it likely hastened, or at least heightened, the depression that would later slow my life to a miserable, static state."

After taking time out for his brain cells to reconvene, Smith washed up in Miami's South Beach, where he returned to action with the first assembly of TLASILA in 1991, aided by Frank 'Rat Bastard' Falestra, who was running a studio back then. "My aim was to combine multiple streams of constantly shifting text to explore everyday human emotions," Smith deadpans. "Through such a corrosive, allusory wash I hoped to reveal thematic connections that I otherwise might never have bothered to uncover." *The Wigmaker In Eighteenth Century Williamsburg* represents the peak of this insane ambition, where Smith wrestles with the kind of transfigurative verse that juxtaposes the snot and body fluids of the poetry of former gonzo rock aesthete Richard Meltzer with the Herculean symbolism of Ezra Pound. Many of the tracks deal with the collapse of his marriage, while touching on all sorts of cultural effluvia in a language that's as singular and deeply personal as the subject matter demanded.

"I've 22 90-minute DATs stuffed with *Wigmaker* mixes, edit sequences, test templates and micro-splice structures," Smith relates. "Initially it was set to run 150 minutes but sanity prevailed. The album became a metaphor for the disintegration of my marriage. Reconciliation followed estrangement, which harrowed further reconciliation, which exacerbated mistrust, which led to outright loathing. It dragged on for years, and the creation of *Wigmaker* was inextricably linked to that collapse. I wanted the album to be absorbing, not a commiserative ordeal. After all, divorce is a rather prosaic subject."

In the wake of *Wigmaker*, TLASILA chose to go out at the top of their game while leaving numerous tribute groups to do the mopping up. In the meantime Smith has joined OHNE, whose actionist-inspired experiments in electronics are currently being documented on Vienna's Mego label. "OHNE's sound is indeed quite removed from that of TLASILA, whose aesthetic was aggressively literate, wholly removed from avant garde norms, and infused with idiot grandeur," he explains. "TLASILA accepted all genres, all sounds, and those that we in turn rejected were heartlessly recycled. We also embraced all things human, relished them, *licked them*. Some folks want wan wax cylinder *scritch*, others want Stockhausen's *Momente* or Cannibal Corpse or James Last and a double fucking vodka. As NWA so sagely noted in "Gangsta Gangsta", *'We don't just say no, we too busy sayin' YEAH!'*" Uh, yeah. □ *To Live And Shave In LA's* The Wigmaker In Eighteenth Century Williamsburg *is out now on Menlo Park. OHNE's* 1 *is out on Mego*



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When he isn't manning the console for projects of the 'magnitude' of a new Peter Gabriel album, sought-after expatriate American producer Tchad Blake lights out for more rugged territories where the phrase 'adventures in music' takes on a wholly other physical dimension. His latest work, *Document: Zimbabwe*, is an audio travelogue that interpolates rural music and urban soundscapes recorded during a trip to the southern African state in 1994. A return visit in the late 90s to tidy up business details alerted Blake to the troubling changes Zimbabwe had undergone in the interim, when he discovered one of the subjects of his album had been murdered.

That happier earlier visit, however, was occasioned by an invitation from Clive Malunga, organiser of the Jenaguru Music Festival, to record a three day marathon that attracted 40,000 visitors. Blake hung out in Malunga's office in the week before the event, meeting dozens of auditioning musicians. During the next fortnight he drove thousands of miles from his base in the country's capital, Harare, to wherever music was being made. Though only one festival track, Mhembero's "Chinyambera", made it onto *Document: Zimbabwe*, the dizzying array of mbube-style choral ensembles, marching bands, banjo players and funk and jive groups he taped constituted a virtual festival in their own right. Cut into their gritty performances are sonic snapshots of Harare's urban life, with trucks and motorbikes whizzing between the speakers. Meanwhile one musician, unable to recruit a new group in time for the sessions, is represented by his recording blasting from a boombox through the city streets.

Clearly, such circumstances were far removed from the conditions governing the productions he's done for the likes of Los Lobos, Suzanne Vega and Tom Waits. At home in Bath, South West England, the nomadic producer has long been an advocate of the binaural recording technique, which involves a matched pair of Lavalier microphones positioned by the recordist's ears to simulate human perception of stereo sound. Introduced in the 50s, the technique has been Blake's passion since beginning his professional life in mid-70s Los Angeles. He employed binaurally recorded tapes as a member of the Los Lobos side project The Latin Playboys, and a Neumann 'artificial head' mic often hangs over the drum kits he records. But his obsession with the audio equivalent of 3-D photography comes into its own on the half dozen binaural studio albums he has recorded for Gabriel's Real World label, such as Indian mandolinist U Srinivas's *Dawn Ragas*.

For the road, Blake's recording set-up is reduced to the headphone rig and portable DAT, leaving him at the ready to capture decisive moments. For a living room encounter with the group Sekuru Gora, he was told, "Take a cab to this address". He continues, "As the cab was pulling up, I put on my binaural stuff and started recording. When I got out of the cab I could hear music. I'd walk into the house – these people weren't expecting me – the group was playing, no one would stop. I'd get a thumbs up from the musicians, then I'd walk around and record the whole thing."

When Blake journeyed to Zimbabwe again in the late 90s in an effort to pay and secure contracts from the musicians who made the cut for *Document: Zimbabwe*, everyday life had become that much harder under the presidency of Robert Mugabe. Of his earlier excursion, Blake notes, "Everything was done on a handshake basis. Not one person asked for anything; most of them were happy to simply have their music recorded and go out into the world." Locating those featured on the album was no mean feat. Blake wasn't looking for long before he learned how Zimbabweans led transient lives, often with violence factored in. Mr Green T Masusa, the first voice heard on the album, had since been murdered by a family member. Blake travelled into the bush to seal a contract with a thumbprint from the late musician's mother. "As I left, she gave me a goat, three chickens, a huge tin of peanuts and a bundle of sugar cane, all of which I was told not to refuse.

"Clive Malunga then introduced me to a well-known local businessman," he continues, "Mr Bulk, a wealthy guy who lived in one of the townships bordering Harare. We visited him: a commanding presence, as big as his name suggests." His business done, Blake was intending to leave the next morning. Mr Bulk had other ideas. "He commanded, 'No, no! You are not leaving!'" Blake shudders. "It didn't matter that I was out of money, or what it would cost to extend my ticket, or my not having a place to stay. Mr Bulk insisted, 'You must record my band! Your trip will mean nothing without my band. My music will make this a hit record!'"

Of course, Mr Bulk had his way. Blake showed up at Harare's Earlside Hotel in time to catch "an incredible set by Bulk Spirits, one that should have been filmed as well as recorded. The group played through one very large, overdriven speaker cone, the naked leads from their microphones jammed into a mixing board with matchsticks to hold the wires in place. The bar was a hole in a chainlink fence. You'd push money through, and a beer would emerge. The place was packed, absolutely jammed. Before beginning, the drummer stood up on his stool, broke some branches off an overhanging tree, trimmed them to drumstick size and started to play." The group's wilful namesake and benefactor, Mr Bulk, was also their lead singer. "He was right," Blake concedes, "Bulk Spirits' song "Commander" was one of the best things on the record." Sadly, Mr Bulk's iron will was no match for fate. Another casualty of the unforgiving land, he died a year before *Document: Zimbabwe*'s release. □

Document: Zimbabwe *is available through www.womadshop.com*



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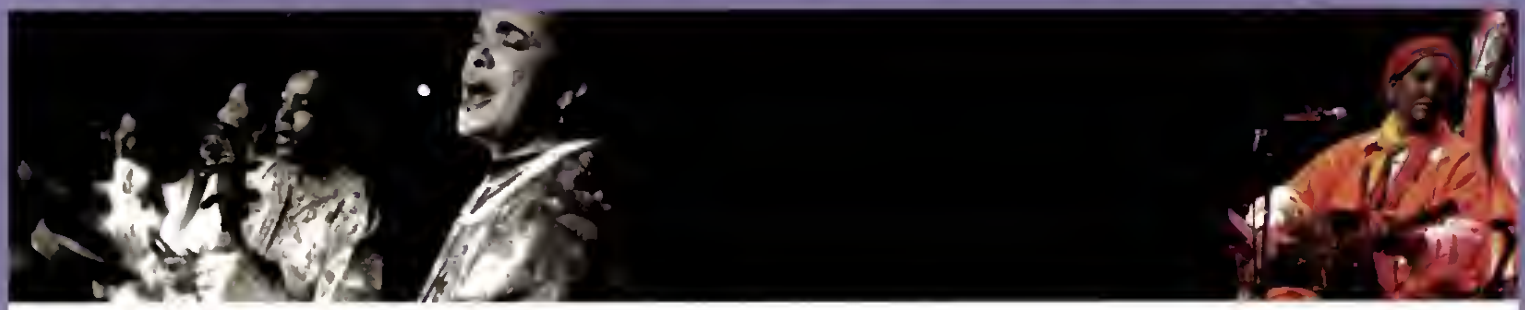
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Global Ear: Marrakech

A survey of sounds from around the planet. This month: In Morocco, Marcus Boon witnesses Gnawa musicians rock Marrakech's Place of the Dead



Woman in Gnawa: B'Net Marrakech (above), Hasna El Becharia

The Djemaa el Fna – translated as the Place of the Dead – is the large square at the centre of Marrakech in southern Morocco. By day it looks unimpressive, despite its antiquity and the heat haze rising off the Tarmac. A few snake charmers wait under umbrellas for tourists wanting their photos taken. But when the sun goes down, crowds converge on the square and clusters of musicians appear with darboukas, djembes and other drums to chant Berber folk or the songs of the Sufi brotherhoods. In another circle, the same hand drums accompany a toothless young man thrashing out scratchy, Beefheart-ish riffs on an electrified oud. Near the orange juice stalls, an especially large group gathers for a long-haired man with a drum and what looks like a photo of himself, flanked by drummers, guitarists and two banjo players. It turns out that the picture shows the leader of revolutionary Moroccan rock group Nass El Ghiwan, who died in a plane crash in the 1980s. This group are playing versions of Nass's stridently political songs, while women covered in traditional head to toe garb shuffle sexily to the music. Meanwhile, next to the fortune tellers and vendors of 'love magic', cassette stalls sell the latest Jay-Z or Limp Bizkit, alongside Arabic classical music and contemporary Moroccan chaabi pop, while 'Arabica' remixes of Oum Kalthoum and Missy Elliott cooked up in bedrooms in Casablanca rock the speakers. Periodically the amplified muezzin call from the nearby Koutoubia mosque cuts through the din. This constantly shifting cacophony marks the square out not as the primitive exotic place beloved of writers like George Orwell and Elias Canetti, but as a contemporary space which sets its own terms – Berber, Islamic, Maghrebi – for the kind of experiments and questioning of values normally associated with the Modern.

Around midnight, as the crowds drift homewards, sounds emanating from the periphery catch your attention. The picturesque costumes of Gnawa musicians, grouped so close to the edge of the square that they are almost run down by traffic, have always been visible. But the quiet steel wash created on their qrakech, or iron castanets, can only be felt from inside their circle. Similarly, the leader's three-stringed guimbri, a bass instrument, is inaudible from afar. By 1am the square is empty except for the Gnawa and their ragged night owl listeners. A four year old boy sits on a rag next to me; a bald, hunchbacked man nods to the music. A disturbed man joins the circle, jabbering to himself, smoking compulsively. The castanets' rippling rhythms flow into a sea of beats, inside which the guimbri moves and the chants grow. When the disturbed man's hat falls off, he takes out his lighter and holds it to his forehead as though he was trying to illuminate his skull and see through it. The Gnawa are known for their ability to work with the mentally ill during all night lilas, which are similar to the vodoun ceremonies of Haiti. If this performance falls short of ritual, a small act of exorcism appears to take place.

The Gnawa, who call themselves "the sons of Bambara", trace their ancestry back to sub-Saharan Africa, from where they were brought by Moorish slave traders in previous centuries (Marrakech had a slave market until 1912). Although they are at the very periphery both of the square and of Moroccan society, in recent years Gnawa has made quite an impact on the global music scene. Like reggae, the sound of Gnawa is easily appropriated. Its key features – supple castanet rhythms, the guimbri's double bass-like loops, trance and chant – have mutated into increasingly novel forms. A music of gaps, spaces and extended durations, it lends itself to remixes and fusion experiments, which fill the 'gaps' with dodgy synth washes, Santana-style guitar and secular words. The Essaouira Festival of Gnawa, one of many annual summer music events that include the Rabat Rhythm and Fes Sacred Music festivals, has become the focus of such fusion activity. A free and freewheeling event staged on the street – indoors and out – around the beautiful coastal town, the festival's guests have included Archie Shepp, Susann Deihim and the Orchestre De Barbès jamming with Gnawa groups from around the country. More than 200,000 people attended the most recent affair. The Gnawa are famed for their ability to manipulate time, but the sale of cassettes of the 2002 festival weeks before it took place is a wholly other kind of manipulation.

Collaboration between Gnawas and American jazz musicians in Morocco has a long history. Pianist Randy Weston lived in Tangier on and off from 1969-75, running a club called African Rhythms, where he and other jazz musicians played with Gnawa master Abdellah El-Gourd, back then an electrical engineer for the city's Voice Of America radio station. El-Gourd's home now serves as a Gnawa shrine and school, where photos of Roland Kirk and old Hammond organs are interspersed with vintage guimbris and photos of masters like Ba Hmid. Weston's *The Splendid Master Gnawa Musicians Df Morocco* (1996) brought together elders from around the country, including the great master Ahmed Boussou. Another collaboration matched Pharoah Sanders and Essaouira's Gnawa master Mahmoud Ghania on *The Trance Of The Seven Colours* (1994). It was produced by Bill Laswell, who has lent his hand to other key Gnawa recordings like *Night Spirit Masters*, made in Marrakech with the incomparable Mustapha Baqbou. Laswell also produced the more tripped out sounds of Aisha Kandisha's Jarring Effects for the excellent Swiss label Barraka El Farnatshi, which champions strange hybrids like Argan's *Berber* and Heavy Metal fusion on *South Moroccan Motor Berber*, and doped out 'Chaabi meets Trance' on the compilation *Impena Consequential*.

Moroccans have also promoted experimental Gnawa, beginning back in the 1970s with Nass El Ghiwan on the album *Chants Gnawa Du Maroc*, whose sludgy, Can-style rhythms and intense vocals sound totally fresh. But the the best known is Hassan Hakmoun, who cut his teeth playing ceremonies around Djemaa el Fna. He moved to New York in 1987, involving himself in its downtown scene. In 1991 he made the impressive fusion album *Gift Df The Gnawa*, featuring Don Cherry and Richard Horowitz. With his group Zahar he made funky Gnawa-Hendrix discs like *Trance* (1994), before returning to more traditional forms. An equally euphoric funk groove drives the Paris based Moroccan-Algerian collaboration, *Gnawa Diffusion*. Casablanca's Dar Gnawa (House Of Gnawa) rap in Arabic over Gnawa rhythms because "we're Moroccans but we're Africans too". Most promising is Moroccan duo Hamid Al Kasri and Issam-Issam, whose lo-fi *Saha Koyo* album of electro jazz Gnawa songs is played on 80s synthesizers and drum machines.

The most important revisions of Gnawa tradition are not necessarily sonic, however. In recent years, a small 'women in Gnawa' scene has developed. One of the great successes of the Essaouira festival has been singer and guimbri player Hasna El Bechana, who was born in the desert town of Bechar, on the Algerian side of the present border with Morocco. But on her first CD, *Djazair Johara* (2001), she plays electric guitar that sounds like a spikier version of Khalifa Ould Eide's accompaniment for Saharan diva Dimi Mint Abba. Elsewhere, the five Berber women of B'Net Marrakech (The Women Of Marrakech) mix Gnawa with rai and Chaabi. Their newly released first CD, *Chama'a*, runs the gamut from love to demonic possession to the heroic Moroccan World Cup soccer team. "Gnawa music is only for men, and it takes a lot of courage to break that taboo," observed one of B'Net Marrakech in a recent Web interview on Globalvillageidiot.net. "We're women who love the night time. Something to smoke, something to drink, and we can play for hours." □

Hasna El Bechana's Djazair Johara is out on Indigo, B'Net Marrakech's Chama'a is out on L'Empreinte Digitale and Dar Beida 04's Impiria Consequential is out on Barraka El Farnatshi. Thanks to Gwen Brown, Pat Jabbar and Magali Bergès

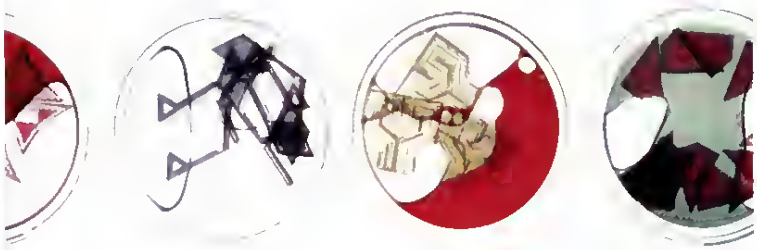
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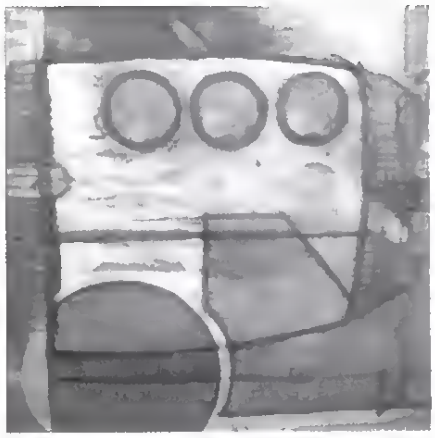


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Arthur Lee

Tested by Mike Barnes. Photos by Mattias Ek

As founder of Love, Arthur Lee became inextricably linked to the Los Angeles music scene of the 1960s, even as his darker, more cynical lyrics set the group apart from the prevailing flower power mood. Born in Memphis, Tennessee in 1945, he was initially steeped in soul and R&B. He released a series of singles between 1963-64 as Arthur Lee And The LAGs and The American Four, among other shortlived outfits. Under the influence of The Byrds' folk rock and nascent psychedelia, he formed The Grassroots in 1965. They soon metamorphosed into Love and released their self-titled debut album, mostly written by Lee, with guitarist Bryan MacLean making the occasional contribution. By *Da Capo* and the orchestral *Forever Changes* (both 1967), Lee's increasingly idiosyncratic songs cut his hyperreal snapshot imagery and jaundiced observations into beguiling arrangements of flute, harpsichord, sax, strings and brass. That *Forever Changes* is widely regarded as one of rock's finest albums had a downside, however, in the long shadow it cast over Lee's subsequent career.

The group split soon after its release, but Lee carried on in various incarnations of Love, with variable results. Under his own name, he released *Vindicator* (1972) and *Black Beauty* (1973) – the latter withdrawn by the record company – on which he aligned hard rock with soul and psychedelia.

In 1995 it looked like Lee's career was over when he received a 12 year prison sentence for firearms offences. He had been jailed before, for violating the probation order he was given on an attempted arson charge. But after serving six years, his fifth appeal against the conviction was upheld. Released in December 2001, he immediately set to work finishing an autobiography, touring with Baby Lemonade as Love, and planning a new album.

In a bizarre twist to the tale, a number of Labour MPs recently put forward an early day motion declaring *Forever Changes* "the greatest rock album of all time". In June, during his UK tour, Lee was invited to the Houses of Parliament to have the motion officially noted. The Jukebox took place in the slightly less grandiose setting of his hotel in Brighton.

DIONNE WARWICK
"A HOUSE IS NOT A HOME"
FROM DIONNE WARWICK SINGS THE BACHARACH AND DAVID SONGBOOK (MUSIC CLUB) 1964

Jesus Christ, that's before I was born. Who originally did this? Is this the original version? Did Barbra Streisand do that song?

I'm not exactly sure who recorded it first. I would suspect it was Dionne Warwick. This is her version.

I've heard this all my life, I think... I like this song. I've just heard a better version of it somewhere, I don't understand who it was. Yeah, I like that. Who wrote it, Burt Bacharach and Hal David?

Yes. Was "A House is Not A Motel", from *Forever Changes*, a pun on the title of this song?

I can understand why you could pick that out. That was before my Love band, before I wrote "A House Is Not A Motel", but I definitely didn't get nothing about anything from that song. After I heard that song I probably got drunk.

Burt Bacharach is often mentioned as an influence on *Da Capo* and *Forever Changes*.

The only thing of Burt Bacharach I did, was [originally sung by] Paul Jones of Manfred Mann, and that was "My Little Red Book", and it was a completely different arrangement. He criticised my arrangement but didn't criticise getting paid [laughs]. But Bryan MacLean, after he saw the movie *What's New Pussycat?* [with the song on the soundtrack] told me, 'Is that what you were trying to do?' And I said, 'Yeah', because I had just learned how to play the guitar. I'm still not really a guitarist like Mike Randall – really, I'm not into it – so I try to stay in my place. I write songs on the guitar and the chords I use are the same chords I was taught in 1964. So what I did was, I made up chords. Like on "The Red Telephone" [from *Forever Changes*]. I don't know what 'A' and all that stuff is, but I was fooling around on the guitar and just made up stuff. I just put my fingers on the strings and strummed it and I heard the music that was coming out of the guitar, and added words to what I was doing. But I didn't know chord structures.

I was assuming you had used some special tuning.

Well, a lot of my songs are like that – "You, I'll Be Following", practically all of the first Love album. Somehow I learned major and minor. I don't know how to explain it because I don't read music or write music at all. David Angel, in the *Forever Changes* thing, people think that he wrote... [the orchestral parts]. I wrote *all* the parts. I can't write charts but I hummed them to him and he arranged things around what I wrote. He was conducting the orchestra but I was really conducting the orchestra, because he was doing what I told him in the beginning.

So all the music was already formed in your head?

Yeah, I got a couple of albums in my head like that right now... When I got out of the joint, first thing I wanted to do was record a new album, because we've laid down tracks, man, like "Feathered Fish", and it sounds far better than The Sons Of Adam. Getting back to that second song, it's a great song but I think you have to be drunk to enjoy it and just been heartbroken or something, right? But I can't take it away from Hal David and Burt Bacharach. I like all their stuff. I admire their writing but they had no influence on me at all.

Are you going to work with an orchestra in the future?

In the fall we're going to do a tour of Europe again with the full orchestra. We used one in Roskilde [Festival, in Denmark]. You see the thing is, my band is so hot and has so much energy when we are playing, when I heard this orchestra behind the music, trying to play like *Forever Changes* and stuff, I had to just block that out. In the place that I just came out of, you learn to block a lot of stuff out [laughs], because there's just noise constantly and I constantly read. And that's what I had to do at this Swedish [sic] gig which we did.

THE SONS OF ADAM
"FEATHERED FISH"
FROM *PEBBLES VOLUME 2* (BFD) 1966

I wrote this song and Country Joe And The Fish said they did. I've never released this song and for someone to play that song for me and my version hasn't even come out yet is quite amazing to me. [Guitarist] Mike Randle and I, and the band I have right now, we play that song, my original band never played that song to my knowledge. Who's getting writing or publishing credits for this song? This is what I'd like to know.

The effort and the music were OK, the words were wrong. Ninth and Hill, is where I went to school, Metropolitan High School. *"There I blow"*, it wasn't *"go"*, it was *"blow"*, and *"Ninth and Hill"* instead of *"Sixth and Third"*. He got the wrong words because he never heard the original, because my original version has never been released.

How did they get hold of the song then?

Randy's [Holden, The Sons Of Adam's guitarist] the one that literally stole my song. I let him come up to my house one day and I played him a song, and the next thing I know they put it out. We became friends. I don't know if he was pissed off with me because I took the drummer [Michael Stuart, who went on to join Love]. He stabbed me straight in the back, man. I was fooling around on the guitar with that song and he put it out, so all these years that's been out under false pretences. [Editor's note: Lee's allegations are not supported by the facts. Randy Holden's post-Sons Of Adam group, The Other Half, recorded the song in 1968 and the song is credited to Arthur Lee, unfortunately a French reissue mistakenly credited the song to Country Joe McDonald. Furthermore, when asked about it in a 2000 interview with online zine *Perfect Sound Forever*, Holden replied, "That's Arthur Lee's song, 100 per cent".]

It's such a good song, why didn't Love ever record it?

Love never put that record out. It's a decent version but the band that I'm with right now do a much better version. *"There I blow"* was blowing in the wind, like my soul. Because he's a square man, know what I mean? He didn't know what I was talking about or my feelings for the song. I had a mynah bird and I had a Labrador retriever and the mynah bird picked up the dog barking. *"That's when my bird begins to bark"*, see, that's really what happened, it was part of my life. He didn't know, he just thought he was getting something for nothing. But hey, life goes on.

Love played on bills with The Sons Of Adam in LA in the 60s. Did you like the group?

Yeah, they played at Bido Lito's when we played there. They tried to capitalise on the venues that I used because we made them so popular. Why would you play somewhere where no one goes, when you could play a place where it's jumping and maybe create the same kind of disturbance? But they didn't.

JIMI HENDRIX
"MACHINE GUN"
FROM *BAND OF GYPSYS* (MCA/EXPERIENCE HENDRIX) 1970

That's the Band Of Gypsys. What do you want to know about that?

How did you meet Hendrix?

I first met Jimi Hendrix at a session on a song I wrote called "My Diary" for Rosa Lee Brooks [in 1964]. [Looking at] Jimi was like looking at my own self. He was more than a brother to me. Jimi was the person that, to me, stayed too long at the fair – always playing

the guitar. Meek, that's the way he was with me, no fighting, no nothing. I turned him onto chicks; he beat them up. I don't know what that trip is, or what that was about.

When I saw him trying to imitate my dress... I think someone told him to put that tie on and go out and do your thing, because when I first met him he didn't dress anything like my first Love album look. When I saw Jimi Hendrix, he was playing at a place called the California Club and I was walking behind a guy with a hoodlum priest coat on runover heels and hair down to his shoulders. He had long hair before I grew my hair out long but he dressed in suits. Then this record "Hey Joe" [came out] and everybody is hypnotised to this record and I said, 'Who is that guy?', because I didn't know the guy's name that played on "My Diary", I just knew that we were screwing the same chick, Rosa Lee Brooks. And it was her idea to bring him on and get a kind of Curtis Mayfield effect on that song. Someone said Jimi Hendrix is playing at the Whiskey [A Go-Go, in Los Angeles], so I go down and look at him and he looked at me. It tripped me out, man. Then the crowd started following both of us.

At that time, that's when I put [hair straightener] on my hair and left it on too long and I passed out and woke up. Hot. And when I washed my hair, all my hair fell out in the washbowl. Then this Jimi Hendrix character was coming out with all these clothes that I was wearing before him. So I took a look at him and put on a T-shirt, went down to the Whiskey and called it a day, took all the psychedelic stuff off. This guy's going to do it, let him do it. I had my fun with it.

He played on "The Everlasting First" on *False Start*. Why didn't you do more music together?

He died, number one. But we were going to put a band together [Band-Aid], with Steve Winwood, Remi Kabaka... There are a couple of versions of "The Everlasting First", there was "Ezy Rider" and there was a long jam, but Jimi – I think he must have been on some kind of psychedelic or something. I said, 'The next song we're going to do is called "Ride That Vibration Down" and this is how it goes: *"Ride that vibration down like a six foot grave/Don't let it get you down"*. He immediately packed up all his stuff and left. I said, 'Where are you going?' He said, 'It's too heavy man, it's too heavy.' 20 minutes later, here he comes walking back into the studio asking, 'What key?' That's another reason we didn't hit it off, because he walked in and out of the studio at least five times during the session. He got a cab, took my drummer George [Suranovich]'s girlfriend with him and George didn't care because it's Jimi Hendrix. They *loved* Jimi Hendrix... But to answer your question, he was using up too much time and I was paying for the session.

it's a great shame, though.

Yeah, the whole thing's a shame. But it's not my call, it was God's call. I saw his death certificate and it said 'Death by asphyxiation'. Whatever, I think the guy was murdered myself...

I was speaking to Gary Marker, who was the bass player in The Rising Sons with Taj Mahal...

Oh, really? [Former Rising Sons guitarist] Ry Cooder made some way out statement about me. Someone told me that he was afraid of me, or something. I don't even know the guy. When I was away I read a lot of stuff. There's this *Castle* magazine [Arthur Lee/Love fanzine] that came out with all this kind of rubbish – anything that anybody sends this guy, he prints and it's just ridiculous. That's why I've written a book, just to clarify. Not that I really care, but I really take what I'm doing seriously and for somebody to defame me or slander me, it really disturbs me. So the only thing I have yet to write in my book is this section called "Rumours"; reading all the rubbish I've read, I'm just trying to straighten that out. But some people tell me, as long as they spell your name right, publicity is good publicity, man. They say some pretty ridiculous things.

Marker was saying that it wasn't easy to get bookings if you were a racially integrated group.

I didn't give a damn. My mother was so white, she might as well have been white, she was very, very light. My father was a brownskin man. Every time I look at my mother I'm looking at a white lady. I'll tell you something I've never ever told anyone, I don't think. My mother used to take me to the supermarket and people would look at her and look at me and couldn't figure the situation out. Was she with a black man? Is that her child? So I would do things like snatch her purse and run, and security would come and chase me down and tell her, 'We've got him ma'am', and she said, 'Got who? That's my son'. I'd do that shit all the time, man [laughs].

KALEIDOSCOPE
"NOBODY"
FROM BACON FROM MARS (EDSEL) 1966

Who's that?

Kaleidoscope.

I heard of them before. 60s band.

Johnny 'Guitar' Watson and Larry Williams play on it.

Is that right? You know [Watson] played better organ than he played guitar, did you know that? Larry Williams got murdered too. He was living in Laurel Canyon. They were sort of friends with Little Richard; he was friends with that area of people: Ike Turner, Larry Williams, Johnny 'Guitar' Watson. I think they were in that three chord progression rut. Where's Johnny 'Guitar' Watson on this record? I don't hear him playing, I don't hear him singing, I don't hear him anywhere on that. But it's not a bad record.

Kaleidoscope were quite folky and psychedelic and came from the West Coast...

They came out after I did. I remember the band but I don't remember that song and I definitely didn't know Johnny 'Guitar' Watson did anything with them. I made some statements about Johnny 'Guitar' Watson and I said that he influenced me when I saw him in a suit and a gold Cadillac. That's total rubbish. I only said that because I was going to court and the people in the jury were from Simi Valley, and I was just trying to piss off the cops because it's a retired police place.

FRANK ZAPPA
"WHO NEEDS THE PEACE CORPS?"
FROM WE'RE ONLY IN IT FOR THE MONEY (RYKODISC) 1968

What's this?

This is "Who Naeds Tha Peace Corps?" by Frank Zappa *and* The Mothers Of Invention.

He's talking about himself, because I knew Frank Zappa when he came in town. He was a coffee freak. He was a phoney hippy, that's what I'm saying. I never liked any of his stuff, ever. We had the same manager at one time, Herb Cohen. But I never understood his stuff. They say you should say something good about the dead, but that music that he made...

What is it that you particularly dislike?

I think it's rubbish. I don't think he understood the hippy... what he's talking about [with reference to the line, *"Every town must have a place where phoney hippies meet"*]. I'm a hippy now and I'm no phoney. I dress the way that I want to dress and I do what I want to do. He didn't get stoned... [distracted] it's so disturbing to my mind that I wish you'd take it off. I think his music stinks and he stinks, but not anymore.

Do you think that in the way he criticised hippies, he was taking a stance just to add to his own notoriety?

I think he took advantage of what was going on and didn't understand the meaning or the movement at all. He's not talking about the freedom and the love that I experienced and the sharing and caring of the people in the so-called hippy generation, because my friends were true friends. When I met people in Hollywood like that, it was just a wonderful thing to me. It wasn't all about getting high. I mean, the shirt off my back – if you needed it and you were cold, you had it from me. And if you had something and I asked you for something, [you'd say] 'Here you are, Arthur'... That's the way it was. It was the best time of my life and I think that we helped start that movement, especially me and the first integrated rock band.

The one thing which always gets said about Love is that, compared with many other psychedelic groups, your music had a much darker side.

I was young and your mother teaches you how to drink a bottle and she teaches you the ABC, but no one really can teach you about death. And it's ever present. When I cross the street, am I going to get hit by a car? I think that God spoke to me and God has touched me, literally, and to hear Frank Zappa was very disturbing just then for me. I think I was chosen to use the name of God which I think is 'Love'. But I think I had to be very disciplined to understand the meaning of what it is and why it is, because I'm definitely here for a purpose.

ARCHIE SHEPP
"NEW AFRICA"
FROM THE WAY AHEAD (IMPULSE!) 1969

What's wrong, why did they let that person do that with the voice? I mean the jazz is cool, but it's like Yoko Ono, isn't it, a bit? Who is that?

Archie Shepp.

But who's the one making all that noise?

it doesn't say on the sleeve.

All I basically listen to now is jazz and classical music because I'm trying to do a new album and I don't want any influences of rock musicians. A friend of mine is Hugh Masekela. We became friends before his hit, "Grazing In The Grass" [1968]. We used to play at the same gig, the Whiskey.

He also played with The Byrds on "So You Want To Be A Rock 'N' Roll Star".

They say that's him but I can't believe he'd do that. And they say that's jazz, and I can't believe they said that. I don't hear jazz in that at all, never did. Because he played doesn't mean it's jazz [laughs].

Did black radical free jazz have an impact on you?

I'm into anything that I think is good, any kind of music. I played harmonica solos, man, that I got from John Coltrane. I thought John Coltrane was a fine musician until I heard Charlie Parker. What do they say, that Jesus is alpha and omega? I think Charlie Parker played everything from the beginning to the end of the way music is going to be portrayed with the horn, because he was an *amazing* saxophonist. I listen to what he is doing and I can't believe the riffs and the licks, and the things that he does. He's phenomenal.

It's too bad he was strung out on whatever he was. I don't know if he could have done anything more. I heard John Coltrane in his music, in the scenes when John Coltrane freaked out: I heard him playing that before Coltrane was even around. I heard him playing just beautiful melodic runs. This guy would come in playing triple notes on just a regular song. He was just a creator, man, and one of the finest musicians. Beethoven was like that. Beethoven to me was one of the greatest conductors, writers of all time.

Did you grow up listening to jazz?

Yeah... I grew up listening to mostly blues and I used to go to different churches, Baptist, holy rolling music, and it just did something to me. My mother was a schoolteacher and she used to leave me at my aunt's to babysit me, and I heard the marching bands. Music just always did something to me, music and sports. I



was great at sports: basketball, boxing, track, football. I'm gifted, but you get your bones broken in those things, so I chose music [laughs]: The most you can do is commit suicide. But I didn't know that until you start fooling around with the wrong kind of musicians.

THE BEACH BOYS
"NEVER LEARN NOT TO LOVE"
FROM *20/20* (CAPITOL) 1969

What do you want me to say? Who is this?

It's "Never Learn Not To Love" by The Beach Boys.

I think that's horrible, but I like The Beach Boys, Brian Wilson, as a whole. I grew up listening to The Beach Boys... while this is playing I can't think of any of their songs. I don't like that. "Surfer Girl", I love that song. "I Get Around", I like that. But I don't know what that is. No comment on that.

This came out of the time when Dennis Wilson hung around with Charles Manson.

I don't see what hanging around with Manson has got to do with that rubbish.

I think he is meant to have written it with Manson.

But you *think* this?

It is well documented that Dennis Wilson entered into a collaboration of sorts with Charles Manson. This was originally a song by Manson called "Cease To Exist".

Yeah, yeah. I didn't have anything to do with Manson or any of that stuff. I don't know nothing about Manson. I know that my guitar player [in The Grassroots], Robert Beausoleil [later a Manson acolyte]... I used to call him 'Bummer Bob' and someone nicknamed him 'Cupid', and he had the audacity to be interviewed and said that I had got the name Love from him being Cupid. He's insane, he needs to be locked back up [laughs]. It's just rubbish.

Bassist Ken Forssi had played in The Surfaris before joining Love. Did surf music make an impact on you?

I liked Jan And Dean and The Beach Boys. I like that falsetto thing that Brian Wilson was doing. I hear he's on tour now but if anyone goes to see him now, I think it's more of a sympathy thing. I wouldn't ever go out if I had a stroke or I couldn't do it to the best of my ability. I mean, what's the point? You did your job, you made your mark... I don't understand someone who couldn't give 100 per cent and continues to try to be a musician. If you can't give 100 per cent, do something else. Play golf, whatever, carpentry – there are plenty of things to do, man [laughs]. I wouldn't go out in the shape that Brian Wilson is in, but Brian Wilson happened to be one of my influences.

In what way specifically?

I like their music and I loved the freeness that Dennis had. He just got too drunk, man. I can't say that I didn't; people could say the same thing about me. I like The Beach Boys but I don't see any comparison with their 'Pet' thing...

***Pet Sounds*.**

Yeah, whatever, but I don't see any comparison with that, *Sgt Pepper* and *Forever Changes*. I didn't see how so-called critics put me with those people at all. What I was talking about was life and death. I wasn't talking about no good vibration. I think they were capitalising on what they thought was a fad at the time, the same as Frank Zappa, and it turned out to be quite popular for them. But I don't think they were living what they were trying to portray as music, but I was. Then all of a sudden they were into psychedelia. Didn't make any sense to me at all, they didn't fool me. Maybe they were involved, I don't know. But I was living what I was talking about, and I was looking around and seeing what I thought was going to happen for a long time.

There seemed to be an apocalyptic feel to a lot of your songs, particularly "The Red Telephone".

Red telephone is the phone for the Third World War, the one the president picks up. There's war going on in "The Red Telephone". At the time that I was writing the song, that's what I thought. But I was young and things that I didn't understand were on my mind and I was writing about things that I thought were going to happen forever. I wanted to retire when I was 21. I did that album when I was 22, so I was a year late. □



KINGS OF THE WILD FRONTIER

SWEDISH SOUND ARTISTS LEIF ELGGREN AND CARL MICHAEL VON HAUSSWOLFF'S METICULOUS, ENIGMATIC INSTALLATIONS AND RECORDINGS COMBINE BASE METALS AND FOUND SOUND WITH SWEDENBORGIAN METAPHYSICS, SCATOLOGY AND DECONSTRUCTED ROYAL REGALIA. IN GOTHENBURG, MAGNUS HAGLUND FINDS THE PAIR CELEBRATING THEIR TEN YEAR JUBILEE AS RULERS OF THE KINGDOMS OF ELGALAND-VARGALAND, THEIR 'VIRTUAL NATION' RECLAIMING THE PLANET'S BORDER ZONES. PHOTOS: KAREEM BLACK

On the fifth floor of the Gothenburg art museum in southern Sweden hangs *Karl XII's Likfard* (*Journey With The Corpse Of Charles XII*), one of the most famous and mythologised images in Swedish art history. Painted by Gustaf Cederstrom in 1878, the canvas is gigantic, the mood grandly tragiheroic. It depicts the king's body being carried ceremonially by his soldiers over the snow-covered mountains dividing Norway and Sweden, where the monarch was shot in the head during a battle in 1718. To the left of the procession, a hunter, accompanied by his son, stands with head bowed, a dead bird slung on his back. Conceptual sound artist Leif Elggren has a strong personal relationship with this painting. In Linkoping, the town in central Sweden where he grew up, a preliminary sketch of it used to hang in the county museum among weapons, skeletons, wagons and other antique canvases. As a child, Elggren was fond of the stillness and silence of the museum, and he found it hard to resist the painting's strange magnetic pull.

"When I was two years old I was adopted," Elggren explains. "I've never met my father, but he is someone I've fantasised about, and this is what I see in the picture – the regret and the wound, a living memory, but hidden away. I'm both the king and the little kid standing to the side. As a child I felt that I had no raison d'être, and for me the making of art has mainly functioned as a way to reconstruct my own life. To build it up again, bit by bit, to contemplate it and incorporate it. There's a sadness about the painting that affects me. It's a dead body they're carrying, yet it's so alive."

The museum has recently purchased one of Elggren's sculptures – a large ventilation cabinet consisting of a warm copper plate with four fans that blow out cold air to create a distinct, pulsating sound – and he's here to fine-tune the mechanism. But he is better known, perhaps, for his playful, yet deeply serious investigations of the symbolism of power, specifically royalty. Images of crowns, ceremonial regalia and rituals of kingship occur repeatedly in his work, most conspicuously in the project for which he is best known outside Sweden: the Kingdoms Of Elgaland-Vargaland, a collaboration with fellow artist Carl Michael Von Hausswolff, which has just celebrated its tenth year of statehood.

Elggren and Hausswolff had been touching the same ideological ground long before the actual proclamation of the formation of the State of Elgaland-Vargland on 27 May 1992. In a 1987 performance called *Vaktombyte* (*Changing Of The Guards*), they descended into the Treasury at the Royal Castle in Stockholm and took over responsibility for the Swedish royal regalia for one day. When the castle guards discovered what they were doing, they were of course thrown out but, oddly, no further legal action followed.

According to Elggren and Hauswolff, the original idea for the creation of Elgaland-Vargaland was born on 14 October 1991, a day they perceive as 'Kings Day'. Five months later, on 14 March 1992, they announced the annexation and occupation of the following territories (according to the *Constitution Of The Kingdoms Of Elgaland-Vargaland*): "1. All border frontier areas between all countries on earth, and all areas (up to a width of ten nautical miles) existing outside all countries' territorial waters. We designate these territories our physical territory. 2. Mental and perceptive territories such as: the Hypnagogic State (civil), the Escapistic Territory (civil) and the Virtual Room (digital)." Since 1992, more than 6DD people have applied for citizenship. With the help of friends and collaborators all around the world, Elggren and Hausswolff have set up Embassies, Consulates and Ministries in cities such as London, New York, Tokyo, Moscow and Amsterdam. In connection with this year's tenth anniversary celebrations, London's Ash International label has issued a double CD featuring tributes from the likes of Fennesz, Jim O'Rourke, People Like Us, Bruce Gilbert, Chris Watson and Mats Gustafsson.

"The different forms Elgaland-Vargaland has taken should be looked upon as loans from the official state and royal hierarchies," says Leif Elggren. "When we made the first proclamation in 1992, the Berlin Wall had recently broken down, the Soviet Union was dissolved and a lot of new states were born in the former Eastern Europe. It was a period of extreme flux and a mingling between political and religious perspectives, which made the demands we were making, connected with ideas about rebirth and eternal life, highly controversial. For us, it was a way to ask questions about the conditions of life around the world." In the performance *Pluralis Majestatis* (commemorated on a recent Firework Edition CD), a metal bed, a real crown and 1D2 crowns cut out of tin cans can be heard vibrating sympathetically, in front of a two-piece portrait of Charles XII. Why do crowns and regalia turn up in his works again and again? "These objects or symbols are used as a way to take over the notion of power," responds Elggren, "to break the spell of the hierarchical system by laying claim to the concepts, formulas and regalia. Something similar can be found in the history of the mentally ill, which is full of imaginary kings and emperors: the idea of the Most High as a compensation for one's own, at the opposite end of the scale.

"For me," he continues, "everyone is king or queen in their own empire, and art can be a perfect tool to overturn the playing board and create your own rules. But of course these ideas of being Christ or Napoleon are often connected with feelings of humiliation, vengefulness and deep pain."

Born in 1951, Elggren is a little older than Hausswolff. They both grew up in Linköping, but didn't meet until the end of the 7Ds, when Elggren had already moved to Stockholm and was studying at the Royal Academy of Art. An interest in drawing started early in his childhood, and later on he became obsessed with mastering more formal techniques. Elggren has worked in many different media: graphic art and printmaking, sculpture and painting, book publishing and electronic composition, performance and installation art. In 1977 he started Firework Edition, a performance project which later developed into the record and book publishing company of the same name. Since his Sons Of God duo with artist and experimental musician Kent Tankred was founded in the early 8Ds, they have staged hundreds of performances and made numerous recordings. The newest, *The Sons Of God Refurnish*, released this month, is based on a performed demolition of the cosy bourgeois apartment where the act was staged. Another collaboration, the group DEG, consists of Elggren on electronics, Swedish saxophonist Mats Gustafsson and the American guitarist Kevin Drumm (a 12" documenting one of their performances is imminent). Central to all his work since the 7Ds is his draughtsmanship, ensuring that whatever the medium, be it record covers, sound installations, books or performances, they're all executed with utmost precision. Another aspect of his art, especially the pieces that incorporate sound, is the desire to confront the listener/viewer with a provocative harshness. In the performance piece *The Sons Of God Driving Chairs*, Elggren and Tankred do just that: screech chairs back and forth in a deafeningly loud fashion – no electrification needed.

During his fine art studies, Elggren specialised in graphic design and printmaking. He even bought himself a bookprinting press, which made a huge impact on his development as an artist. "With the printing press I was able to do my own books, and at a very cheap cost," he asserts. "The 'do it yourself' aesthetic is something I still believe in, even more now than when I started. Before I bought the press I was involved in several independent magazine activities in Linköping. One, at the beginning of the 7Ds, was called *Guru Papers*; which later developed into another called *Vesuvius*, which was also a performance group. I was heavily influenced by surrealism at this time, reading writers like Lautréamont, Breton, Artaud, Bataille and Borges. There's an incredible sense of freedom and openness in the early surrealist period, which I still find valid. By letting the inexplicable stay inexplicable, people's thought and association systems get heated up and a dream reality invades the everyday world. Nowadays it's kind of ridiculed and looked upon as cliches, like in cartoons when they want to show contemporary art and you get these distorted paintings putting incompatible details together. But surrealism was about changing the content of society and the human beings in it, a belief in creation that in some cases was close to delusions of grandeur. Without this danger, what would art be?"

After working with etchings and copperplate engravings for many years, in 1981 Elggren mounted a performance and recording in Gothenburg called *Cu*. The title is the abbreviation for copper, the 63rd element in the periodic table – a metal that's unusually sensitive to sonic vibrations. He made a drypoint engraving on a contact-miked copper sheet, transferring the resulting sounds to a vinyl single. The flipside contained the sound of the reverse process, as he used steel wool and oil to erase the image he had engraved. "It was a way to say goodbye to graphic art and still use the means I had at hand," he says. "I felt an inner need for change, and had to find other tools for making art. The next step was to capture the sound at the instant it met the physical material. I used a nail and engraved a sentence directly into wax. It was like going back to the days of [phonograph inventor] Edison: the idea of engraving a line in physical material, and by that reading off a landscape, was deeply fascinating."

Copper is also a key element on Elggren's *Talking To A Dead Queen* CD (Fylkingen 1996), where a copper rod almost four metres long was connected to an amplifier through a highly sensitive contact microphone. The noise picked up by the mic caused the metal tube to vibrate, generating a feedback loop that accumulates into an immense body of sound. The piece was partly inspired by the diaries of Napoleon, kept during his exile on St Helena, where he writes about his earlier dream visions of historical figures speaking to him through the vibrations of copper rods. Elggren has also used such a rod as a symbolic antenna, mounted on a tripod beside a replica of the 17th century coffin of Queen Christina of Sweden. "When the rod started to sound it was an extraordinary moment, almost like a revelation," he exclaims. "But this is an important aspect of sound art for me: to discover levels of reality that exist immanently and can only be made manifest through extreme close-ups or enlargements, as if you worked with the finest of microscopes.

"Copper is soft and shapeable," he continues, "more organic than iron, which is solid and thicker in its molecular constitution. To draw out the inner voices of copper you have to be sensitive. And this is probably the reason why copper bears the feminine symbol as its chemical sign."

The 18th century Swedish mystic Emanuel Swedenborg, who also trained as a mineralogist and scientist, devoted much of his life to building a system of correspondences between the heavenly and earthly aspects of human life. It's no surprise, then,

AGE OF TREASON: CARL MICHAEL VON HAUSSWOLFF (LEFT) AND LEIF ELGGREN AT THE PIEROGI GALLERY, NEW YORK, MAY 2002

to find that his work is another of Elggren's reference points. On the *Latrine* CD (Firework 2000), Swedenborg's notion of excrement as the lowest level of Hell is the starting point for noises recorded in the toilet – mostly water flushing through pipes, thankfully, rather than overtly scatological reports. In *New Jerusalem*, an installation exhibited in June at New York's Pierogi Gallery, Elggren explored the Swedenborgian vision of the divine life hidden in the body of every human being, by projecting an image of an old man fumbling and twisting in a chair through a black mirror, from beneath the gallery floor. "I want it to be like when you were walking on ice as a child," Elggren elaborates, "and saw the trees and sky reflected in the ice, and the immense precipice opening up under you. From small speakers you hear the murmur of voices and distant human activities: someone singing, people rushing by. The video of the old man and the sounds are not synchronised, but create new and unpredictable patterns."

"A lot of artists feel an urge to participate in society," says Carl Michael Von Hausswolff, seated in a Gothenburg bar. "Considering the state of the world at the moment, a commitment is somehow inevitable. But there's a lot of confusion around the question of documentation. Where does reality start and where does it end? The music that interests me is mostly free of ornamentation, and focuses on the basic sounds and electronics themselves. The same tendency can be seen in contemporary art, photography and film. Wolfgang Tillmans's and Richard Kern's explorations of the mundanity of consumerist society have many points in common with sound artists like [Pan Sonic's] Mika Vainio and [Raster-Noton's] Carsten Nicolai. It's a question of the aesthetic aspects of everyday objects as well as a pronounced interest in interferences and disturbances. What is it that makes us naked and vulnerable?"

Hausswolff is presently one of the most important and influential figures in Swedish sound art – and was so even before he was appointed curator of the 2003 Gothenburg Biennale. Born in 1956 in Linkoping, he moved to Gothenburg at the end of the 70s, living there for about 15 years before settling in Stockholm. Early in the 1980s, together with Ulrich Hillebrand he started the record label Radium 226.05, and released groundbreaking LPs by artists like electronic composer Rune Lindblad and the Stooges-drenched Union Carbide Productions, covering terrain from the experimental leftfield to the most accessible pop music. The label even topped the Swedish charts with a power pop version of cheesy FM hit "Oh Mama" by a group called Sator.

Radium's pop success was a useful front within the record industry, but more significantly it served as a screen behind which Hausswolff published an art magazine, also called *Radium 226.05*, whose first issue appeared in 1986 (you had to wait until 1989 for number two). Such dissembling tactics have always been an integral part of Hausswolff's modus operandi. "We were all very conscious about the history of contemporary art," he explains, about his formative years. "The influences came from Fluxus-oriented artists like La Monte Young, Yoko Ono and Joseph Beuys, combined with the critical eye of William Burroughs. In 1980 we made a performance event in Konsthallen in Gothenburg with participation from people like Sten Hanson, Dror Feiler, Åke Hodell, Lars-Gunnar Bodin, Leif Elggren and a whole programme with Fluxus pieces by Dick Higgins, George Brecht, Alison Knowles and Yoko Ono. Then I started doing longer pieces together with Leif Elggren, Thomas Liljenberg and Erik Pauser, most of them connected with fundamental living conditions, like eating and housing. These pieces often took place over periods of 24 or 48 hours. It was all about creating states of exhaustion, but also a way of finding some kind of self control. I think it's quite common among artists at that age, around 20-25, to try to find solutions to the brainwashing you've been exposed to. And this is the reason why William Burroughs became such a key figure for us."

Burroughs is a constant reference point in the life of the Radium collective. In 1983 the visionary writer was invited to give a reading in Gothenburg, and later on he and cut-up pioneer Brion Gysin were featured in the first *Radium* magazine, along with an interview with Paul Bowles and other Beat-oriented material. When the second issue surfaced three years later, the focus had shifted in the direction of New York's East Village, and featured the likes of Jim Thirlwell (aka Foetus), Lydia Lunch and film maker Richard Kern. But Burroughs's influence was still discernible, particularly in Hausswolff's interest in states of transgression and surveillance, in mental warfare and trance states.

One such experiment in extended durations and sonic mesmerism is Hausswolff's LP *The Conductor* (1983, Radium). The sound material was sourced from a live installation in a water tower, where a microphone connected to a stethoscope and Hausswolff's own heart, picked up both the sounds of the room and the rhythm of the heartbeats. Hausswolff isolated the recording's bass frequences and studio processed them to create a minimal pattern whose shape was determined by the introduction of very high and low frequencies at lengthy intervals. The piece is shrouded in a dark and ominous atmosphere, as if a formation of bombers were flying low overhead. A similarly austere atmosphere characterises a more recent recording on Raster-Noton, *Strom* (Swedish for current and flow). A 50 Hz bass tone sounds throughout the 48 minute piece, with live recordings from electric systems all around the world, taped with a telephone bugging microphone, dropping in and out at different points along the line.

Hausswolff describes his aesthetic as a meditation on the physicality of sound. With the aridity comes a heightened sensibility and concentration on the sounds themselves, a condition brought about by different strategies for wearing down entrenched listening habits. Unknown territories are brought into existence during Hausswolff's flow of crackling radio signals, insignificant noise and atmospheric disturbances. The hums of refrigerators and radiators function as spiritual transit points, mantras for the electronic age. Which could be the reason why many people have expressed scepticism about some of Hausswolff's activities, especially the projects, seances and recordings that purportedly document contacts with the voices of the dead, as on *Operations Of Spirit Communication* (Die Stadt, 2000), or the retrospective exhibition with the works and recordings of the Swedish scientist and 'Electronic Voice Phenomenon' recordist Friedrich Jürgenson (as featured on *From The Studio For Audioscopic Research* CD through Ash International/PARC). The installation, *Establishing Communication With The Fallen Angel*, mounted at New York's Pierogi Gallery in June earlier this year, furthered Hausswolff's experiments in tuning into the ether. This time he upped the stakes with an attempt to establish radio contact with the Devil himself.

It's easy to lampoon such apparently fraudulent humbug, and certainly provoking strong reactions is part of Hausswolff's strategy. But also evident in his music and installation works is a quest for materiality and precision that connects with the tradition of earlier sound craftsmen like Alvin Lucier, Gordon Mumma and Luc Ferrari. Many of his pieces deal with the physics of electricity, using conductors and resistors to focus on the way sounds travel from one source of current to another. It's a hands-on way of dealing with the electrical forces that surround us in daily life. "What I strive for is a state of insecurity and ambiguity," Hausswolff affirms. "It should feel like the first time you explore something, and the last time."

Hausswolff frequently collaborates with other artists. Outside the Elgaland-Vargaland project and his own work, he has participated in various exhibitions with Tommy Gronlund (founder of Sahkö) and Peteri Nisunen from Helsinki, played in the Swedish group Phauss, and with Wire's Graham Lewis and Jean-Louis Huhta in Ocsid. After Radium closed in 1991, he started the Anckarström label, on which he released ten CDs in the first year by a wide cross-section of contemporary sound artists including John Duncan, Stelarc and The Hafler Trio. When I ask Hausswolff what he considers the experimental edge of sound art now, he answers by referring to the spirit of these collaborative actions. "To bring my own works in close contact with other artists' activities has become more and more important," he asserts. "Maybe it's a reaction to the vanity and empty consumerism of the established art scene, the way you're supposed to build a career and accumulate your own 'art capital'. I perceive art to be the opposite of all that, a way to preserve non-hierarchical attitudes towards creation. Which is kind of paradoxical, since the art world is one the most hierarchical structures there is.

"When we started Radium in the beginning of the 80s," he concludes, "the spirit of punk was very important. Punk had by then already been betrayed, made into a fashion show and consumer item by people like Malcolm McLaren. We tried to reinvent it by doing the opposite, like using monotony and sitting watching a painting for a long time. Now it seems to be the same again. To make art is to say, 'Leave me alone, stay out of my face. I want to create my own rules.' Which immediately puts you in contact with other people feeling the same. Art is still an act of opposition."

Hausswolff's newest CD is called *A Lecture On Disturbances In Architecture*. It starts with the voice of maverick architect Buckminster Fuller, opening a talk by pronouncing: "I never prepare my lectures." "The record is a reflection on the idea of housing and how sound is related to spatial questions," he says. "What happens if we eliminate electronic disturbances from a room? Why do certain architects construct rooms so low that there is no space for angels? When do the sounds that surround us, like mobile phones and central heating, co-operate to bring out a decent way of living?"

The creative output of Leif Elggren and CM Von Hausswolff now spans some 20 years of concerts, performances, installation work and recording. Once perceived as shadowy or marginal activities on the fringes of music and art, their work has slowly gravitated centre stage, culminating in their attendance as Swedish representatives at the Venice Biennale in 2001. Critics would be hard put to detect any compromise or crack in their austerity in their progress towards wider acceptance. Maybe it's all down to the word that more than anything sums up their collaborations through the years: communication. "The possibilities of participation are extremely important," concludes Elggren, "but also the sense of being left alone. The reason why sound art has been such a creative zone during the last two decades is that it has been relatively protected from media coverage and career opportunities. Maybe this experimenting stage is over now, when the activities have become more visible in the spotlight. Still, it's a very open moment. It's impossible to say where things are going." □ *Carl Michael Von Hausswolff's* A Lecture On Disturbances In Architecture, *Leif Elggren's* Extraction, *The Sons Of God's* Refurnish *and Sten Hanson's* Text-Sound Gems And Trinkets *are released this month on Firework Edition.* The Kingdoms Of Elgaland-Vargaland 1992-2002 *compilation is out now on Ash International Website: www.it.kth.se/KREV*

"EVERYONE IS KING OR QUEEN IN THEIR OWN EMPIRE. OF COURSE THESE IDEAS OF BEING CHRIST OR NAPOLEON ARE OFTEN CONNECTED WITH FEELINGS OF HUMILIATION, VENGEFULNESS AND DEEP PAIN" – LEIF ELGGREN





CHIMES OF FREEDOM

AMERICAN COMPOSER LOU HARRISON IS ONE OF THE LAST LINKS TO THE BIRTH PANGS OF NEW MUSIC, HAVING



STUDIED UNDER SCHOENBERG, HENRY COWELL AND CHARLES IVES AND TRADED INNOVATIONS WITH JOHN CAGE. A PASSIONATE ADVOCATE OF ALTERNATIVE TUNING SYSTEMS AS A ROUTE TO SOCIAL CHANGE, HIS 50 YEAR CAREER ENCOMPASSES BALINESE GAMELAN, JUNKYARD PERCUSSION, IMPRACTICAL ENSEMBLES AND ESPERANTO IN HIS SEARCH FOR AN INCLUSIVE MUSICAL LANGUAGE. WORDS: PHILIP CLARK. PHOTOS: EVA SOLTES

In 1943, Lou Harrison was a 26 year old composition student preparing to relocate from Los Angeles to New York. His teacher was the formidable pioneer of serialism Arnold Schoenberg, whose parting words were, "You don't need to study with anyone – study only Mozart." In the event, Harrison's move to the East Coast was disastrous. He suffered a catastrophic nervous breakdown and fled back to California in 1953, restarting a life that has since been filled with music of breezy optimism, ornate simplicity and exotic tunings. It's become fashionable to blame Schoenberg's legacy for the crisis of arid note spinning and charmless complexity that characterises so much New Music. But in Harrison, Schoenberg recognised a composer whose gifts pointed elsewhere, and thus pointed him in the right direction. By pointing him towards Mozart, he sent the clearest possible signal that his pupil should look for the essence of melody and clarity of texture that Harrison's West Coast rebirth has come to symbolise.

Now in his 85th year, Harrison has lived two hours south of San Francisco in the tiny rural community of Aptos since 1953. In the late 1970s he and his partner Bill Colvig built the house they still live in. Its prefabricated structure is filled with Harrison's manuscripts and paintings, as well as the pair's homemade instruments. The composer's own huge painting of a nude Tchaikovsky depicted as a sage dominates the living space, while on the stove sits the pot of soup that has been in place as long as the house. Constantly topped up with vegetables and sauces, the soup has been affectionately nicknamed by one of his neighbours as "cream of garbage". That remark could also be applied to Harrison's early scores for junk percussion ensembles, wherein he cooked delicious melodic stock and contrapuntal gravy from materials that American consumer society had written off as garbage. Brake drums, clock coils, wooden boxes, wash tubs and empty oxygen tanks have all found an elevated role in Harrison's music far removed from their original function.

In early works for more traditional forces like the fantastical opera *Rapunzel* (1952-53) and his orchestral *Symphony On G* (started in 1947 and revised throughout the 60s), Harrison transformed serial dogma into a fluid and characteristically playful means of expression. Inspired by Harry Partch's inspirational book *Genesis Of A Music* and by a lifelong curiosity for non-Western systems of musical organisation and tunings, he turned his attention to Asian music, and to the practices of gamelan percussion in particular. His *Concerto In Slendro* and *Serenade For Betty Freeman And Franco Assetto* (1961) were among the first Western pieces to incorporate such Indonesian elements. They were also the first to be written with a true understanding of gamelan ritual and aesthetic. Other suites and concertos have fused Western soloists with gamelan ensembles in hybrids that celebrate Harrison's belief in the genuine cultural crossover that can only spring from rigorous compositional practice. He is decidedly not an American composer who writes cod-European forms with a Yankee tinge. His music is the experience of a West Coast American who has bathed in the sometimes tense but ultimately enriching cross-fertilisation that exists in American society.

'Schoenberg and I got along very well," Harrison recalls. "It's a mystery to me why other composers didn't see and hear everything that was going on in Schoenberg's music. He of all people gave me the final advice towards simplicity. It s served me well, but perhaps his other pupils were too steeped in history to see the full picture. Schoenberg had to be asked to talk about his own music and he never voluntarily said a word about it. I was warned by his assistant that he wouldn't even look at a 12 tone piece or talk about serial theory, but I bravely took the first two

movements of my 12 tone *Piano Suite* for him to look at. I was having real trouble with the third movement, but Schoenberg told me it was good and to go on. Then I got to the bit where I'd boxed myself in, and Schoenberg immediately recognised my difficulties and told me to write only the essentials and the salient. 'Please don't decorate,' he said, and that was the first I heard from him about being simple."

Harrison recalls his weekly symposia with Schoenberg as being very open and rather cordial occasions, where the master would sometimes stop to listen to birdsong or even dive under the piano if an aeroplane passed overhead. "We had to rescue him if that happened because it reminded him of Germany during the war," he explains. "But people don't realise that he enjoyed making wisecracks and jokes, and he was totally charming. He was delighted when one of us turned up with something to play that we were working on, otherwise he'd analyse a Beethoven symphony or something similar. We ganged up on him once and demanded he told us how he wrote his second string quartet. He told us that it was very easy, and the next week he brought it in and it was indeed very simple. I then realised anyone could write Schoenberg's second string quartet, as long as they were Arnold Schoenberg!"

Far from being the narrow-minded purist as received opinion would have it, Harrison suggests that Schoenberg was conversely "interested in all sorts of areas and styles". Nevertheless by the time he enrolled as a pupil, he had already had a grounding in 12 tone theory through the pioneering American experimental composer Henry Cowell, whom he describes as "my mentor of mentors". The two met when Harrison took Cowell's Music of the Peoples of the World course at the University of California in 1935. Cowell's music had preoccupations and used techniques that predated Harrison's own. His *Aeolian Harp* (1923) conjures celestial glissandi sounds from the inside of a grand piano, while *The Banshee* (1925) and *Tiger* (1928) explore the sonorities and tensions that result from forearm clusters. Harrison, who is currently preparing a transcription of Cowell's *Koto Concerto* for the harpist Karen Gottlieb, suggests that his mentor gave him the technical and aesthetic information he needed to begin his career.

"I'd had teachers before Henry," he remembers, "but I learnt more from Henry than most and later on it was Henry who put me in contact with Charles Ives. I took lessons from him in melodic construction and three kinds of counterpoint, and Henry even made me monitor of his very informative Music of the Peoples of the World course so I could afford it. There's a new book of Cowell's writings just been published and I was shocked to read that Henry considered John Cage and I as his contemporaries. In my case there's a 17 year age gap, but Henry and myself talked a lot about music, and I think it was that almost continuous interchange of ideas and concepts that made him think that way about me."

Pieces like *Aeolian Harp* and *Banshee* not only inspired Harrison to explore the ruder limits of instrumental timbre, they also sowed the seeds in John Cage's mind that eventually grew into the pieces he wrote for prepared piano. Cage appeared in Harrison's life in the summer of 1938 through a simple knock at his door, followed by the words, "My name is John Cage – Henry Cowell sent me." The two young composers could hardly have had more in common and quickly became close confidants and friends. Both were West Coast Americans and former Schoenberg pupils concerned with keeping European models at arm's length. They were also involved in contemporary dance and had ideas to write works using junk percussion.

"Henry's ideas licensed myself and John to go to automobile and junkyards and get whatever we could that sounded well," Harrison remembers. "At that time automobile brake drums were of course wonderful. They were spun steel and made a perfectly beautiful bell, and if you turned them over and played in the axle hole, you got a brilliant trumpet sound. Today people can only get cast iron and it goes 'clink' without making any singing sound at all. I heard a massacre of an early piece recently just because the performers weren't using the right sounds. I think I'll write a little booklet about how the pieces should sound and then adequate substitutes might be found – even junk isn't what it used to be these days.

"Of course part of the reason for using junk was pragmatic," he continues. "Symphony orchestras and the like are not prone to opening their doors to young composers. So John and I simply played our music and that of our friends. Whatever they required we got, and we created a world of our own music. What's more it had an audience. We simply went about our business."

A recent CD on hat ART, *Labrynth*, documents many of these early Harrison compositions, and it's inspiring to hear the subtle musical forms and interrelationships he spins from such seemingly primitive hardware. *Fugue* (1941) builds on Henry Cowell's method of generating rhythmic material from intervallic relationships, while *Labrynth No 3* is a work in four movements characterised by charming drum melodies and countermelodic accompaniments. *Double Music* – also from 1941 – was composed jointly with Cage, and Harrison describes it as a "very large mosaic". He and Cage wrote two lines each, and when they were put together no changes were necessary. "The little rhythmicals [rhythmic cells] we used could either be played, repeated or omitted in any direction," Harrison explains, "and so it was very tightly controlled. It comes off because we both followed the rules we'd laid down. Had one of us decided to do something different even for one measure, the whole piece would have been wrecked."

Harrison retained immense personal affection for John Cage until the latter's death in 1992, even though as early as the late 1940s their music was heading in diametrically opposed directions. As a consummate craftsman and rigorous cultural magpie, Harrison was never comfortable with Cage's provocative randomness and anti-musical rhetoric. It's ironic, then, that it was Harrison who introduced Cage to the *I Ching* in the early 1940s.

"I've regretted it ever since," he mockingly laments. "I still have my own attempts and trials at writing pieces using methods taken from the *I Ching* that date back nearly two decades before John got involved. But I never got to the point of actually considering tossing for the notes – I'm a composer and a musician and therefore I choose my notes! If you leave things to chance, then you're no longer a composer; and John became a philosopher, a talker and a thinker. For example, John liked Asian music and had knowledge about it, but he didn't practise any or know how to do it. Had he become involved in it in a practical way, it would simply have become another system he would have needed to upset."

When Lou Harrison arrived in New York in 1943, he was full of hope that the city would offer him new directions and personal happiness. But he felt ill at ease almost immediately. Despite writing eloquent reviews of contemporary music and classical concerts for *Modern Music* magazine and the *New York Herald Tribune*, he was constantly skating along the edge of a financial abyss. Moreover, the clamorous noise and intense movement of New York didn't suit him. Yet despite his discomfort he did manage to make inroads into the musical life of the city. He became a close friend of the veteran American composer Virgil Thomson and acquainted himself with the work of Alan Hovhaness, an American composer of Scottish-Armenian descent whose neo-tonal style complemented Harrison's own.

During his New York stay, Harrison also met Charles Ives for the first time. He had been corresponding with Ives and his wife Harmony for many years, and Ives was touched by the younger composer's understanding and devotion to his music. Harrison had even produced performing editions of Ives's music, and in 1946 he conducted the premiere of his third symphony, *The Camp Meeting*. This performance led to Ives winning the Pulitzer Prize the following year, at least ten years before the likes of Leopold Stokowski and Leonard Bernstein were regularly staging his music.

However that same year – 1947 – marked the nadir of Harrison's life. He had become listless and introverted, as if New York had finally beaten him. Frightened about how society judged homosexuality, his personal life was in disarray. But Harrison's friends rallied round: Cage took him to the psychoanalytic clinic at the Presbyterian Hospital, and wrote to Ives, asking him to contribute to Harrison's hospital fees. Ives promptly sent a cheque for $250. In all, Harrison spent nine months in hospital, the last few as an outpatient. The period had a profound effect on his music. The solo piano work *Triphony* is terse and angsty, but light appears in *Symphony On G*; and by *Rapunzel* the embryo of his mature lyrical style is fully apparent.

"My *Symphony On G* is a rambunctious Schoenbergian piece with one hit tune," Harrison proclaims. "I started it when I was in hospital and many people think that the cello choir in the scherzo is the high point of the work, and it always takes the show. After I left New York I moved to Black Mountain College in North Carolina, where I finished my 12 tone life with *Rapunzel*. Boy, did I trap myself! Midway through the piece I suddenly realised that I didn't seem to have the usual amount of notes. I examined the row and noticed that it replicated itself, so in effect I only had one half of the material. I had to pull out all of my compositional tricks to get through the opera but it holds the boards."

It's difficult to comprehend that such a shimmering and generally optimistic score as *Rapunzel* could have been created by a composer recovering from a nervous breakdown. But Harrison views composing the opera as a process of self-analysis, writing that the work deals with "the problems, tortures, and false rapture that I was myself experiencing in analysis and psychotherapy". He chose a text by Victorian Arts and Crafts designer and socialist William Morris as the basis of the composition.

"*Rapunzel* is a serial work but I did have my own ways of doing things," Harrison explains. "For example, I may use the first two tones from the row as a drone, something that immediately implies a sense of tonality. This is similar to what [Alban] Berg did, of course, but I also use clusters to reinforce a tonal direction. I'd fallen in love with Morris's politics, his painting and his poetry, and Morris himself had already divided his *Rapunzel* text up into acts so it seemed natural to turn it into a piece. I wrote most of it at the Gate House at Black Mountain College, a lovely small house I'd sort of appropriated. I was living off a Guggenheim Fellowship and I had my studio and a piano. It was fall and I entertained my friends with sweet wine and nuts, and within the year I'd completed the opera and copied the music and had it all ready by the time of the last cheque. I've claimed it as one of the two things I've done right in my life – the other was cooking my mother's apple pie recipe."

Harrison was still in New York in 1949 when Harry Partch's book *Genesis Of A Music* was published. Virgil Thomson had been sent a review copy, the content of which mystified him and he handed it to Harrison for his opinion. In fact Harrison had reviewed a concert of Partch's music a few years earlier, but





ABOVE: LOU HARRISON ON STAGE WITH POET GARY SNYDER. BELOW: HARRISON'S PARTNER WILLIAM COLVIG WITH GAMELAN-STYLE INSTRUMENTS

was decidedly unimpressed with what he heard. "Mr Partch has woven a spell of about the foggiest and dampest music I have ever heard. I got homesick," he wrote in *Modern Music*. Nevertheless *Genesis Of A Music* opened new doors for Harrison. It led him to question the validity of the Western system of equal temperament tuning, and to look to Asia for more rarefied and beautiful tunings.

"Before Virgil gave me *Genesis Of A Music* I was already reading books discussing temperaments and tunings," he remembers. "But it suddenly became a bigger thing. Within a week of reading Harry's book, I had bought a tuning hammer for my piano and started experimenting. I then became acquainted with Harry and we enjoyed one another's company. We'd exchange instruments and I recall telling him that he could get a 42 note scale out of the concert harp. Harry liked scales with 43 notes and he would have been prepared to forgo the 43rd note, but he didn't like the sound of the harp!"

Harrison's objections to equal temperament are musical, philosophical and social. His basic complaint, which echoes that of former La Monte Young cohort Tony Conrad, is that by smoothing out the third, fifth and seventh of the scale, Western civilization has corrupted and diluted the natural sound of the harmonic series. A bland and corporate tuning is the result, a system that has jackbooted its presence into music that ought to be tuned more subtly. Harrison's complaints about the Imperialist arrogance of such a tuning system has obvious political nuances, its implied intolerance reminding him of the way society might view his sexuality. He has written with uncharacteristic obstinacy that Just Intonation (a tuning system using pure intervals from the harmonic series) "is the best intonation", and he sees it as representing the triumph of inclusiveness over standardisation.

"Equal temperament destroys everything and is not for the human ear," he scowls. "I was recently asked by an extraordinary Greek scholar, who's working on chanting Homer about using a scale involving three-quartertones. And I finally decided, no, that's just another equal temperament based on quartertones. I get vertigo when I hear music tuned in this way. When I hear Chopin's A minor piano concerto, I enjoy the opening introduction for the strings. It's very beautiful and I settle into the modality. Then all of a sudden the piano enters and I get dizzy because it's not tuned right.

"But the interesting thing is that Chopin himself didn't use equal temperament," he continues. "He used one of the various well-temperaments [scales derived from Just Intonation]. We don't know which one, but one could be found easily enough. Here's a West Coast American talking, and for someone like me equal temperament is a special thing unto itself, and it's only properly existed since the second world war, when we've had the instrumentality to produce it electronically. When great virtuosi at the start of the 20th century travelled to play solo concerts, they always had an accompanying tuner. The purpose of that tuner was, he was able to produce a subtle well-temperament that corresponded with the repertoire of the pianist. It was that congruence between the composition and the tuning that made the performance a success."

Harrison's own most radical statement about tuning came in 1955's *Simfony In Free Style*. Pieces in 'free style' require that each note is only in tune in proportion to the pitch it follows. That principle – together with an impractical ensemble calling for flutes, viols, harps, trombones, percussion and tack piano – means the work has remained an ideal rather than a reality, although the composer David Doty made a computer realisation in 1993. Elsewhere, though, Harrison has written perfectly practical and performable pieces that call for standard instruments

to be tuned away from equal temperament. Linda Burman-Hall's recent CD on New Albion of Harrison's complete music for harpsichord, tack piano and fortepiano (reviewed in *The Wire* 220) is a retrospective of 50 years' worth of music, with each separate piece requiring its own appropriate tuning. *Village Music* has its major thirds and perfect fifths tuned justly, whereas the *Six Sonatas For Cembalo* employs a Baroque well-tempered tuning called Werckmeister III. And Harrison has written that his 1985 *Piano Concerto* "sums up the whole history of Western tuning", no less. Originally commissioned by Keith Jarrett, the concerto also uses a Baroque tuning system, deploying C major as a basis to explore pure perfect fifth sounds and very sharp major thirds. The second movement is a 'stampede' in which the pianist uses a short wooden block to hammer out clusters from the keyboard.

Harrison was instinctively drawn to the refined and highly cultivated tunings of the Balinese gamelan. He had heard gamelan recordings during his studies with Henry Cowell, but his first live experience was at the 1939 Golden Gate Exposition. Typically, his involvement with gamelan has been rigorous and all-encompassing. Composers as different as Boulez, Britten, Henze and Tippett have all suggested the picturesque colours of the gamelan in their scores. Although it is genuinely startling to hear Tippett evoke the Balinese form in the opening movement of his first piano sonata, the suggestions are highly stylised. Britten's use of the gamelan in his ballet *Prince Of The Pagodas* (1957) is merely programmatic, whereas the brittle marimbas and clangorous gongs of Boulez's *Le Marteau Sans Maître* (1955) suggest an initial influence transformed beyond recognition. Only pieces by the American composer Colin McPhee were informed by the same sort of hands-on musicological research that Harrison has undertaken. For Harrison, nothing less than full acceptance by the gamelan community will do: he spent an intensive period studying with gamelan master Pak Cokro. Together with his partner Bill Colvig, Harrison has built gamelans and is concerned to make his own unique contribution to the tradition.

Harrison describes a concert in Hollywood where Pak Cokro was performing with the American gamelan. "He'd written a very fancy 'on and off the freeway' piece," he recalls. "It was full of entertaining features and a good demonstration of what could be done with advanced, whimsical gamelan. During the intermission, Cokro came over and asked me to compose for gamelan. You could have knocked me over with a piano! It had never occurred to me that a composer *could* play with a gamelan – I always thought they were in universities where people could go to learn the classics of Javanese art. But here was this great force in gamelan music asking me for pieces. I started straight away and I haven't stopped since."

Harrison regards the idea of a Western soloist playing in equal temperament against the gamelan orchestra as perverse, and in his pieces Western instrumentalists are always required to adopt the tuning of the gamelan. Pieces like the *Suite For Violin And American Gamelan* (1973) and *Main Bersama-sama* (1978) for French horn and gamelan are charming works in which his love of Baroque counterpoint feeds into Balinese music to produce a genuine cultural interchange. Indeed, *Main Bersama-sama* literally translates as 'playing together'. There is however one major exception to Harrison's rule.

"In *Pacifika Rondo* [1963] I make a complaint about the filthy Bomb," Harrison explains. "I wrote the piece at a time when [atomic] bombs were being exploded in the Pacific Basin, from which the people are still suffering consequences today. There's a movement called "Hatred Of The Filthy Bomb" and it's a complete serial piece using equal temperament. The other movements use more subtle forms of tuning from Korea and Japan, and I'm very careful to keep them separate. But equal temperament in that case is used as a form of protest. At the end the performers are required to scream, and when The Oakland Youth Orchestra performed it we couldn't get the kids to scream! They could only yell and the conductor Bob Hughes had to take over and teach them. It was fascinating to realise that kids don't know how to scream anymore."

When Harrison began composing for the gamelan there was inevitable opposition from purists, but he is pleased to note that it disappeared rather quickly. "The younger generation from Indonesia who were interested in gamelan leapt into the fray," he says. "They were pleased to help, and there is very great interest from Indonesia that we're building new instruments and doing new pieces. This work enriches the tradition and secures its future – after all a tradition that begins around the year 235 is bound to need a little refreshment now and again. Pak Cokro himself comes from the Paku Alaman Palace in Yogyakarta, Bali. His family intermarried with another palace in Surakarta, and when a marriage like that takes place there is also an exchange of art forms. Ways of playing gamelan, singing and dancing become fused, and I've had such fun over the years disentangling what came from where."

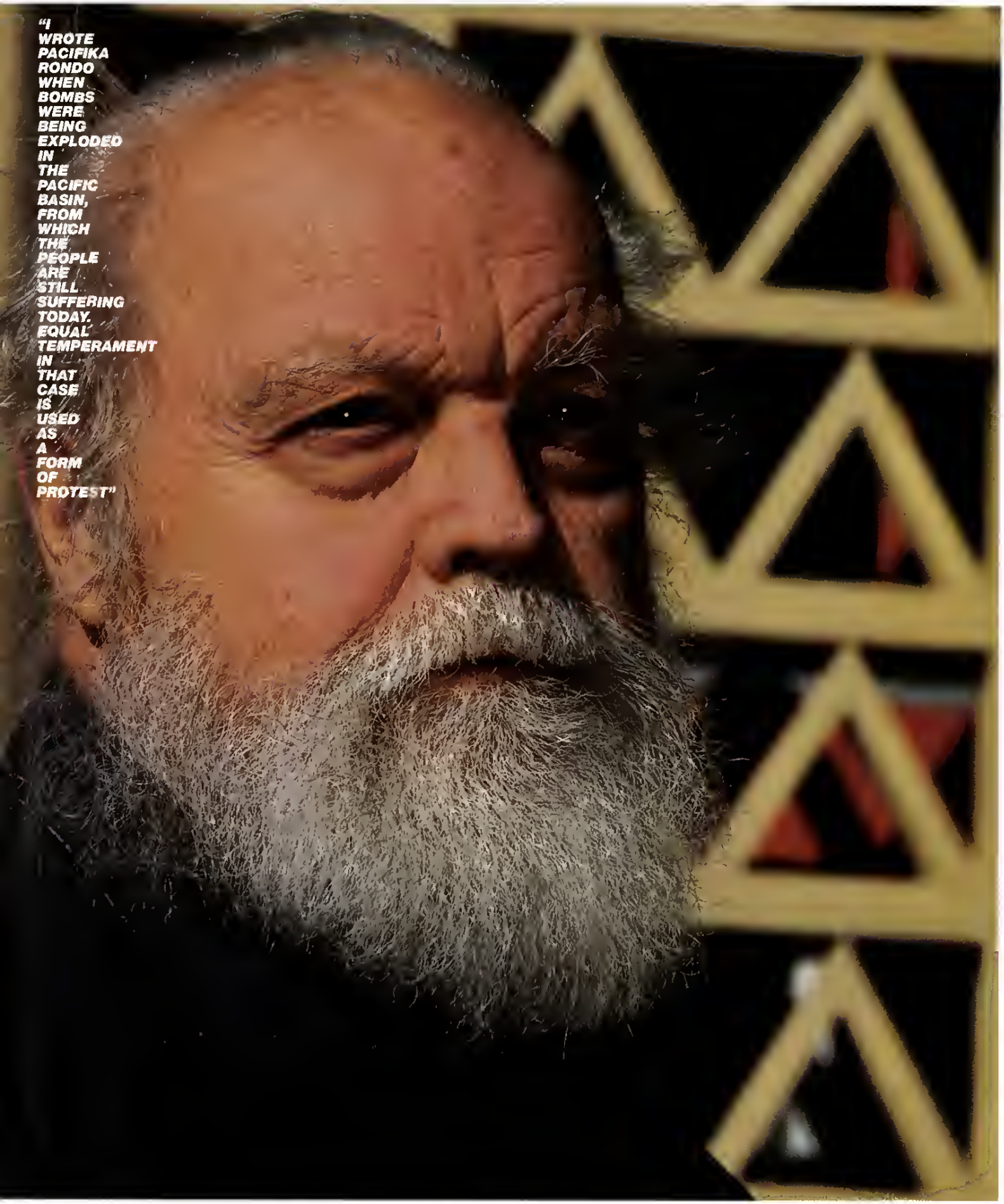
Harrison is currently writing a book called *Poems And Pieces* in which his texts will be interwoven with Javanese compositions, both elements using the distinctive form of gamelan cipher notation. One of his most recent works, *Scenes From Nek Chand*, is scored for a special slide guitar of his own design.

"My *Scenes From Nek Chand* has caused a whole factory to produce a new type of national steel guitar," Harrison boasts, tongue firmly in cheek. "The piece has a sort of silly starting point. When my mother used to leave us children on our own, we'd entertain ourselves with recordings and the radio. At that time Hawaiian slide guitar music was very popular and that wavering sound has been in my mind ever since. So when this commission came along, I thought I'd write a little piece about that childhood experience. The factory in California produces the most beautiful instruments, and they're all fretted to the smallest degree to produce any Just Intonation you require."

Meanwhile, Harrison continues with his unwavering support for the Esperanto movement. Advanced old age has failed to dim his enthusiasm and curiosity for the unknown and new. "It's the 20th anniversary of the recording of my work *La Koto Sutro*, which has an Esperanto text and has become an unofficial Esperanto anthem. The Esperanto League of North America wishes to honour me with life membership. I'm not even fluent in Esperanto, but I do like the idea that everyone should learn their natural tongue but also Esperanto – it's a good plan that would solve lots of problems." With its ideals of building a new language from basic fundamentals aimed at bringing different cultures together, Esperanto is based on the same principles upon which Lou Harrison has built his career. In the process he has spent his life "It's such a beautiful, musical language to hear," he concludes. "It has the open vowels of Japanese and Italian with a rich assortment of consonant sounds to draw on." □

Labrynth *is out on Hat ART.* Complete Harpsichord, Tack Piano And Fortepiano Works *is out on New Albion.* *Eva Soltes is a photographer, film maker and music producer who is on the verge of completing the documentary* Lou Harrison: A World Of Music *(www.harrisondocumentary.com). Thanks to Tom Welsh and Charles Hanson for their help in preparing this article*





"I WROTE PACIFIKA RONDO WHEN BOMBS WERE BEING EXPLODED IN THE PACIFIC BASIN, FROM WHICH THE PEOPLE ARE STILL SUFFERING TODAY. EQUAL TEMPERAMENT IN THAT CASE IS USED AS A FORM OF PROTEST"



SIGNALS FROM THE TONE WORLD

WHETHER HE'S PROVIDING THE HEARTBEAT FOR CECIL TAYLOR, DAVID S WARE OR HIS OWN FREEDOM ORCHESTRAS, BASSIST WILLIAM PARKER EXPLORES THE SYNAESTHETIC TONE WORLDS OF 'BLACK MYSTERY MUSIC' IN AN ATTEMPT TO BLUR THE BOUNDARIES BETWEEN RITUAL MUSIC AND JAZZ.

DAVID KEENAN GOES INTO THE MYSTIC WITH THE LOW END SHAMAN, TRACKING THE JAZZ TRAIL FROM HIS BOYHOOD PASSION FOR DUKE ELLINGTON TO HIS TIRELESS IMPROV ACTIVISM AS THE 'MAYOR OF THE LOWER EAST SIDE'. PHOTOS: MATTIAS EK

"Each culture has its mystery music, music played by certain special musicians, and this music is not taught in music school. It is sacred music that is not adverse to life." Writing in his privately published *Sound Journal*, William Parker doesn't talk much about jazz. He prefers the term "Black Mystery Music", defining it as a seamless historical continuum of shamanic musicians working at the furthest reaches of form. "Soon it was found that music had special effects on people," he relates. "Mainly, music could heal the soul and the body – not when played by everybody, only when played by certain ones who were chosen and accepted. Music master, prophet, healer, shaman, priest; ones whose music could make the dead rise, music that would change lives. Each community had its master musicians, and each had its own method and approach, while at the same time, music was coming from the same sound universe.

"We may have all the instrumental technique in the world," he goes on, "and be able to read and play all kinds of music. This does not mean that we can cause sound to vibrate enough for us to enter into the tone world."

For anyone who has actually made physical contact with the spirit-surging power of Parker's many groups, this is no mere obfuscatory, pseudo-mystical rhetoric. When he's performing live, Parker regularly takes on the mantle of some otherworldly conduit as he attempts re-entry into his self-styled 'tone world', a synaesthetic zone where colour and sound blur, all rhythm occurs at once and feeble conceits like linear time fly out the window. Where the music, as he puts it, "exceeds its own properties".

"The tone world concept first appeared to me in 1977 when I was playing at 77 Greene Street, drummer Rashied Ali's place," Parker explains. "It was a Sunday afternoon and I was performing with a group called Ensemble Muntu, led by saxophonist Jemeel Moondoc. In the middle of the set I took a solo and during it I began to see lights and colours, and my bass lifted up off the ground and I played it like a saxophone. This was the first time I lost myself in the music and stepped into the tone world. Then I began to put bits and pieces together over the years until this reality became clear. The tone world is the real world. We are living in the illusionary world. This sentiment echoes every day."

In the Scottish castle town of Stirling, where The William Parker Quartet headlined the second night of the Le Weekend festival earlier this year, the presence of the tone world was almost palpable, as Parker led his group through a series of compositions and improvisations that drew as much from psychedelic ritual music as they did from urban American jazz.

Parker is fascinated by pan-cultural correspondences – by the way ritual music can manifest itself across so many different cultures, yet functionally remains the same, satisfying a deep-seated need that traverses the differences between civilizations. His concept of the tone world proposes the idea that our reaction to music, to specific rhythms and sounds, happens on a cellular level, and that the same evocative patterning systems that trigger our responses can be found everywhere in the world. In this, Parker has much in common with the film maker and archivist Harry Smith, who saw the same sense of order in painted Ukrainian Easter eggs, string figures, psychedelic fungi and rural folk music. In his *Sound Journal* Parker further delineates a system of correspondences that, again like Smith's, is kabbalistic in character, linking certain colours with specific sound properties. For example, he equates blue with "Sky, water, ballads, long horizon tones", and purple with "Leaf, flower, sunset, blues", so that "A ballad with a slight tension might use a blue-purple energy system". Throughout the journal there are little hermetic sketches, diagrams and globes that recall the Renaissance cryptograms of mystic philosophers and proto-scientists like Giordano Bruno and Robert Fludd. In his teenage years, Parker also immersed himself in procedural maps like the Tibetan Book Of The Dead and the compassionate teachings of the Buddha; the resonance of such texts is felt throughout his musical philosophy. A kindred vibration emanates from Smith's animated alchemical films, which Parker possibly saw while attending the regular Film Anthology series at 88 Wooster Street in the late 60s, where he also encountered the work of avant gardists like Kenneth Anger and Jack Smith.

Although Parker's main instrument is the double bass, in recent years he has added an armoury of sound devices to his repertoire, from double-reeded horns like the musette through the donso ngoni, an eight stringed harp from Mali, and the mesmar, a double reed from Pakistan. At Stirling, Parker opened his set with a duet with drummer Hamid Drake, whose tonal drum work sounded like a Pygmy dance troupe beneath the euphoric waves of Parker's dousson ngoni. The music sounded as defiantly American as the work of Harry Partch, yet as culturally removed as the sun-soaked Bahamian guitar music of Joseph Spence or the kora music of West Africa. As soon as alto saxophonist/flautist Rob Brown and trumpeter Lewis 'Flip' Barnes emerged from the shadows to join the rhythm section, we were back on the dusty streets of downtown New York, albeit with our heads still buried in the clouds.

Like Duke Ellington before him, Parker's music is vast and ambitious enough to speak of whole new tonal worlds that challenge conventional ways of listening. Yet it is precise enough in its street language and codes to ensure that its communications are never vague or flighty. And boy, can it move. Although Parker's apprenticeship with masters of the new language like Cecil Taylor and Peter Brötzmann taught him how to speak in the most abstract of alphabets, in his recent work he has redefined himself as an almost linear generator of time. The William Parker Quartet's new disc, *Raining On The Moon* (Thirsty Ear), is dominated by his walking basslines, which recall the tactile wood and wire feel of John Coltrane's late bassist Jimmy Garrison; while his duo CD with Hamid Drake, *Piercing The Veil* (AUM Fidelity), plots a series of exercises in pure rhythm. Indeed, the rhythm was so pure that American mixologists Organic Grooves reworked the entire set as a series of DJ friendly plates. "Walking the bass along with the drum has always been the root of black music," Parker asserts. "Just listen to Paul Chambers [the bassist who played with both Coltrane and Miles Davis, appearing on *Giant Steps* and *Kind Of Blue*]. No matter what kind of music you play there must be a heartbeat, a pulse. This is a sign of life. I think I'm interested right now in connecting with people through melody and chant. It's all music, one rhythm on top of another. This is why you play with as many groups as possible – blues, funk, whatever – it's all part of the menu."

Parker's CV is all over the map. He's been working the fringes of New York's creative music scene since the 1970s with an evangelical fervour that led to him being dubbed "the mayor of the Lower East Side". As well as fronting The William Parker Quartet and The Little Huey Creative Music Orchestra, among others, he enjoys a pivotal role in many of the new music's most advanced small units, from David S Ware's quartet through Peter Brötzmann's Albert Ayler-inspired group Die Like A Dog to Cecil Taylor's Feel

Trio with percussionist Tony Oxley. "A musician must do some kind of apprenticeship with a master," Parker states. "A degree in jazz is just a preliminary foundation. But to learn the music of a master like Thelonious Monk is really to learn the music of the self. That is, after studying and playing Monk, one would hopefully get the idea that Monk's music is for Monk to play. Everyone must find their own music. When you play with different masters, like Bill Dixon or Cecil Taylor, they give you an example of the possibilities of music, how to put it together, build it and reconstruct it, how to allow it to flow and grow on its own terms."

"You can study with God direct," Parker deadpans. "But most times you need a middle person to get you started." It was Parker's father, Thomas, who provided this first vital spark. Parker Sr was brought up in Goldsboro, North Carolina, but as a teenager, after some unnamed trauma that he would never talk about, he set out to hitch to New York. He took a job as a furniture repairman at Morris Pall on East Broadway on the Lower East Side, but by night he immersed himself in the new jazz. While he was growing up, William Parker recalls, his father nurtured him with daily doses of Duke Ellington's 1956 set from Newport, where tenor saxophonist Paul Gonsalves tore through 27 blues choruses on "Diminuendo And Crescendo In Blue". His father's secret dream was to see both his boys join the ranks of Ellington's orchestra, William reveals, though he only got to hear about it after his death. "That was the first truly profound music I heard," Parker recalls. "And it was also highly danceable. My brother and I used to have nightly dance contests to it, just running and jumping until we were exhausted." The Ornette Coleman Trio's *At The Golden Circle* was another favoured soundtrack, and soon their father, picking up on the euphoria that the music instilled in them, kitted the pair out with instruments. Parker's older brother started on a curved soprano sax at the age of nine, while Parker himself was given a trumpet and a subscription to some mailorder lessons. By the time he hit high school, he had moved over to the trombone and cello, and he finally switched to the bass after joining the orchestra in junior high. "But it wasn't until I began listening to the beautiful delicacy of Percy Heath's basslines with The Modern Jazz Quartet that I began to hear and feel the sound of this rather large instrument," he confesses. "After that I began to look for the bass on every recording. So if I was listening to Ellington I'd pick out John Lamb's work, or if it was Cecil Taylor I'd pick up on Alan Silva's work on *Conquistador* and *Unit Structures*. But it was through Jimmy Garrison's work on John Coltrane's *A Love Supreme* that I really heard the possibilities of communication on a deep spiritual level. This helped to confirm my decision to play the bass and to know that music was the thing for me on several planes. Flowers were beginning to grow in my room and music was beginning to change my life, to uplift me and heal me." Again, like Harry Smith, Parker saw music as a vehicle for social change. "I knew music could change and affect the world in a more profound way than politics," he testifies, "because music was dealing with the soul. Music could change people inside out. A musician was a revolutionary."

Seizing every opportunity to play, Parker immediately immersed himself in bass lore. His intensive application opened up to him the bass's potential to contain every other stringed instrument, and he set about devising the corresponding techniques needed to reach them. Although technically a virtuoso player, his breakthrough necessitated unlearning his conventional training, so he could approach the bass without any preconceived notions of how it should be played. As a result, he now treats all its wooden body as a sounding board, playing it percussively, jamming sticks beneath the strings to create jarring counterpoints, fingering without plucking and, most spectacularly, drawing sobbing tone-arcs from the strings with his dextrous bowing. Indeed, his arco work is particularly affecting in its emotional precision. Naked and alone, as on *Lifting The Sanctions* (No More), he plays with the ferocity of Shiva, phantom limbs slicing the air and seemingly moving the music in several directions at once.

Parker has worked hard to establish the parameters of his own musical universe. "I started to relate to the idea that every human being, free in the universe, was at the same time connected and disconnected to everything that was a source of light," he explains. "Each musician tapped into this same light and came up with different music, and this music was unique yet it related to the others in many ways. Marion Brown was different from Roscoe Mitchell, as was Malachi Favors different from Charles Clark. Each musician was literally his own universe. Although no one is separate from the sound world – it's where we are all born out of – some of us are endowed with special gifts that can only be developed or ignored, never created. If we are able to untap just one of these gifts we could unveil a beautiful piece of the universe as it manifests in the self."

Parker expanded the reach of his own personal universe throughout the 1970s, a decade he remembers as a "vibrant and beautiful time", where he was full of music, often playing the day through, from 10am to three in the morning. As well as working with folk singers, poets and a small theatre group called The Juju Players he held down the bass spot in a couple of free jazz groups, most notably The Juice Quartet, whose repertoire included pieces by Wayne Shorter, John Coltrane and Miles Davis alongside their own material. He also served time in the ranks of alto saxophonist Jemeel Moondoc's Ensemble Muntu, and their relationship flourishes to this day, as the duo's *New World Pygmies* series on Eremite makes clear.

The underground ESP-Disk label, famously responsible for early sides by Albert Ayler, Alan Silva and Frank Wright, represented another strain that was particularly important to Parker. In 1973 he made his recording debut as part of the group assembled by saxophonist Frank Lowe to record *Black Beings*. "With ESP-Disk the music was strong and the covers were stark and direct," he enthuses. "They looked you right in the eye, and it was a real contrast from other record labels. I first heard of Frank Lowe from the record he made with Alice Coltrane [*World Galaxy*], and also his work with Sunny Murray. I think I first met him down at Sam Rivers's place, Studio Rivbea. At the time, Ornette Coleman had a space at 131 Prince Street where he let musicians produce their own concerts, and Frank was putting this thing together there with Joseph Jarman on reeds, Rashid Sinon on drums and Raymond Lee Cheng [aka 'The Wizard'] on violin. He asked me to join on bass and we played two evenings of very fine, inspirational music. I never saw Albert Ayler live – although I really should have, but things never worked out that way. I followed Albert's music through the recordings and became very attached to it. When *New Grass* came out in 1968, a record that many people didn't like, I heard Albert Ayler's voice speaking his message very clearly. It was like an echo vibrating in my heart. He said, 'I have come to Earth to bring the people of Earth a spiritual message through music.' Albert said this. The



WILLIAM PARKER PHOTOGRAPHED IN STIRLING, SCOTLAND, APRIL 2002



"IN THE MIDDLE OF THE SET I TOOK A SOLO AND DURING IT I BEGAN TO SEE LIGHTS AND CDLOURS, ANO MY BASS LIFTEO UP OFF THE GROUNO AND I PLAYEO IT LIKE A SAXOPHONE. THIS WAS THE FIRST TIME I LOST MYSELF IN THE MUSIC AND STEPPEO INTD THE TONE WDRLD"

Reverend Frank Wright said the same thing, and Pharoah Sanders later echoed it when he stated that *"The Creator has a master plan, peace and happiness for every man"*."

Another of Parker's key groups from the 70s were The Music Ensemble, a collective evolved from regular sessions featuring longterm Parker associate Daniel Carter on saxophone, drummer Roger Baird and trumpeter Malik Baraka, later augmented by trumpeter Dewey Johnson, violinist Billy Bang and electric bassist/cellist Earl Freeman. Parker describes The Music Ensemble as "my mentor, my academy, my soul brother". "We would play very long forms, sometimes playing up to five hour sets," he recalls. "We played what I called 'daily music' We would play a sound, then another and another until we had built a sound painting, and we included poetry, small sounds, long sounds, blues and jazz Each player was free to contribute and use any sound that was available. We learned how to negotiate, create and filter sounds, to live time in the moment. I learned how to construct music from total silence, to tap into this already existing place called the sound stream and redirect the flow of sound outwards through the bass and through the other musicians."

Their painstaking way of building the music slowly, accruing detail into a matrix of throbbing colour, is best illustrated by "Stance Dance", which opens the retrospective CD *The Music Ensemble* (Roaratorio, 2001). Here, their commitment to non-idiomatic improvisation leads them to places yet to be mapped, and they're in no hurry to go back to them. Much like the process that birthed them, Parker sees the ensemble as "perfection that cannot be repeated, only continued". Indeed, his partnership with Daniel Carter continues in Other Dimensions In Music, with trumpeter Roy Campbell Jr and drummer Rashid Bakr, but the work of The Music Ensemble is conceivably closer to In Order To Survive, his group with pianist Cooper-Moore, drummer Susie Ibarra and altoist Rob Brown. They're presently on hold, but their 1998 double set, *Peach Orchard* (AUM Fidelity), best mirrors The Ensemble's laggard grace.

While improvisation remains Parker's prime interest, the compositions he wrote for his Quartet album, *Raining On The Moon*, reach new poetic heights. The music itself ranges across rollicking, eerie blues, locomotive grooves and passages of unanchored blowing, all contained within the composer's exquisite songforms. With lines like *"I have a ragdoll filled with sunlight and when I squeeze it the world gets brighter and brighter"*, "Song Of Hope" best illustrates the luminous quality of his writing. But the title track, with its future vision of a United States presided over by Sitting Bull, where every American lynch party victim is resurrected in order to forgive their killers, best conveys the depth of his compassionate utopianism.

The album's featured vocalist Leena Conquest ensures that *Raining On The Moon* stands shoulder to shoulder with such pan-genre classics as The Art Ensemble and Fontella Bass's *Les Stances À Sophie*, or the sides Archie Shepp cut with vocalists Jeanne Lee and Bunny Foy. Meanwhile, the album turns on the pivotal relationship between trumpeter Lewis Barnes and altoist Rob Brown, inside which Barnes's languorous, brassy sound is expertly shredded and webbed by Brown's exhilarating blowing. "I've been working with Rob Brown since 1985," Parker reveals. "From the first sound of his horn I knew that he had a voice. Nowadays this is rare. Lewis Barnes has also worked with me since 1985. We've played the music of James Brown together, and he's also a member of the Curtis Mayfield project that I do. There is a magical thing that happens when Lewis and Rob play that really transcends explanation, particularly in this period. To quote Rob, the music seems to 'jump off the page'." Parker met vocalist Leena Conquest about five years ago, when they worked together in a Latin music show called *The Man From San Juan*, and he soon asked her to sing with his Little Huey Creative Music Orchestra. "I always liked Mahalia Jackson and Marian Anderson, and Leena falls perfectly in line with these wonderful ladies," he says. "When I'm working with music for the quartet that involves vocals, I normally write about three or four minutes of music on the lead sheet, but the majority of the music is still improvised.

"Improvisation is what I'm interested in," Parker maintains. "It is the thing that will get you closer to God. Improvisation is playing and floating with the music. Not interfering with the breath of life. Composers have killed more music trying to control it, but sound must be free to grow on its own terms. I know that some might say music must have a beginning, a middle and an end, but I think all it needs is to come alive. Once that happens, there is always a beginning, middle and end."

Parker's decade-plus relationship with pianist Cecil Taylor served to further bolster his already evangelical belief in the transcendental power of free improvisation. They first met through the late trumpeter Arthur Williams in 1973, when Taylor was rehearsing a large orchestra largely made up of his students from Antioch College in Yellow Springs, Ohio. Although Taylor hadn't heard Parker play, on Williams's recommendation he invited him to join the group, with a view to playing a big band show at Carnegie Hall. Taylor had pooled four drummers (a killer section: Andrew Cyrille, Sunny Murray, Marc Edwards and Rashid Bakr) and four bassists (Parker, Sirone, Erol Henderson and David Saphra), alongside a frontline that included trumpeter Raphe Malik and saxophonists Charles Tyler and David S Ware. "Like Ellington and Monk, Cecil Taylor constructed his music sound by sound and note by note in order to create a living musical painting, where the colours were alive and could shift and breathe," Parker relates. "As the piece would grow, new shapes were formed minute by minute."

In December 1980 Parker finally joined The Cecil Taylor Unit, staying with them until 1990. "It was a great experience as far as investigating those landscapes of sound in extended forms," he remembers. "It is great music, but you have to be a great musician to play it because you are given so much freedom that it can become meaningless. Jimmy Lyons could play the music inside out and make it come to life, but you have to be a master improvisor to do that, and sometimes I don't know if people really know the difference. Jimmy Lyons was a master. He knew his horn and he didn't just honk and scream, he had a language. In fact Jimmy was the heir and extension of Charlie Parker. He was closer to Bird than anybody in the world, while at the same time he maintained and developed his own identity."

Out of all Parker's many musical alliances, his 11 year partnership with tenorist David S Ware and pianist Matthew Shipp as part of the David S Ware Quartet has been his most enduring. Alongside a conveyor belt of drummers (currently the powerhouse percussionist Guillermo E Brown), they have established themselves as the undisputed heirs to the diverse legacies of John Coltrane's classic *Love Supreme* quartet and Frank Wright's early 70s Centre Of The World group. Whether revoicing a weepy showtune with tongues of fire, walking tightropes over mile-long electronic drones or playing straight out of the pocket, their thumbprint is always unmistakable. Parker first got to know Ware in the early 70s when he was living at 501 Canal Street, "a centre for cosmic music and creativity" that also housed pianist and instrument inventor Cooper-Moore, composer/vocalist Ellen Christi and drummer/song and dance man Tom Bruno.

At the time, Ware was leading the group Apogee, featuring drummer Marc Edwards, pianist Cooper-Moore and bassist David Sapphra, which Parker characterises as "the ultimate experience in sound". "I met Matthew Shipp in 1984," he continues. "He was a very recognisable spirit and a spiritual person who was on the way to creating his own spin on the idea of music. He was from a different generation, bringing a new outlook to an old situation and was interested in working out how to play music without making compromises, while actually making a living and building a foundation for the future. The forming of The David S Ware Quartet was eventually to be a landmark in the musical community, both musically and socially. It was very evident that the Ware/Shipp/Parker combination would last for the count. The drum position has shifted, but we three have remained the entire time."

Amazingly, given his hectic schedule, Parker has only missed one gig in 15 years. Clearly some things are meant to be. "The major contribution of this band is their clear vision, their integrity and spirituality," he declares. "The essence of our sound is in the way that we take the basic elements of music and personalise them while extending them in order to reach into the essence. David S Ware has an illuminated sound. Not just a big sound but also a magical sound that is functional. Coleman Hawkins had that kind of sound, where one note becomes a symphony. Matthew Shipp also has a magical grasp of sound.

"When I use the term 'grasp'," he clarifies, "I mean that he allows the sound to flow on its own terms without musical interference. Many musicians nowadays ruin the music by interfering with the flow. There is a big difference between a composer and a conduit, and I prefer the concept of a conduit. God is the composer and we cannot outdo God. Musicians must learn to work with the universe, not against it."

But the reality of the universe, in all its workaday greyness, inevitably gets in the way. "I was married in 1975 when I was 23 years old, and I have always played music for a living," Parker concludes. "In the early years I worked at the post office and I've also been a cook and a maintenance man. All the time I played music and supported my family, although there were very sparse times when I had to be on public assistance and rely on food stamps. My parents had no money to help me out. In order to survive I did what was necessary. I played for weddings, fashion shows, block parties and all kinds of social events. I think it is harder to survive in America now and most musicians who support themselves from the music have to rely on going to Europe. America is still underdeveloped in regards to art support and the majority of people support pop music, not because the music we make is too far out or because they won't like it. They don't support the music we do because it is not offered to them in the same way they are offered pop music. Still, there is so much work to be done and life is so short, there is really no time to be depressed or crazy. Your responsibility is to use every moment to get to the centre of existence. Music is life, and life is magical, every second we are alive." □ *William Parker & The Little Huey Creative Music Orchestra*'s Raincoat In The River: Vol 1/ICA Concert *has just been released on Eremite. William Parker Quartet*'s Raining On The Moon *is on Thirsty Ear, whose Blue Series has just released DJ Spooky*'s Optometry, *featuring Parker and Matthew Shipp. William Parker & Hamid Drake* s Piercing The Veil *is on AUM Fidelity. Cecil Taylor*'s *Feel Trio*'s *ten CD set*, 2 Ts For A Lovely T, *is out soon on Codanza. For Parker*'s Sound Journal, *visit www.williamparkermusic.com*


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MUSICIANS



WISING UP THE MARKS

TOM WAITS

AFTER SPENDING THE

FRANK'S WILD YEARS, THE BLACK RIDER, MULE VARIATIONS AND MORE. PHIL FREEMAN MEETS THE SONIC CONJUROR, CONMAN AND VISIONARY

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THE

RECENT ALICE AND BLOOD MONEY RECORDS; PLUS HIS COLLABORATIONS WITH ROBERT WILSON, WILLIAM BURROUGHS, FRANCIS FORD COPPOLA AND HIS WIFE KATHLEEN BRENNAN. PHOTOS: ANTON CORBIJN

There are two types of confidence trick: the short and the long. In the short con, you target your 'marks' and take them for everything they've got. In the long con, you send them home to get more. "I've always been fascinated with those confidence games," Tom Waits chuckles. "It's pretty remarkable. It's kind of part of our culture, isn't it?" His laugh is like gravel shaken in a sandpaper-lined box, but his speaking voice is not as ragged in the flesh as in song – more a middle-aged man with a sore throat than the hoarse, chainsmoking demon familiar from his albums.

The con trick is *the* performance art that contains all others. Any artform based on an invented persona that necessitates keeping in character and improvising within it owes something to the con. Involving seduction as much as playing to the audience's sense of itself and need for approval, the con is the basis of theatre and rock performance. In one sense, Waits is comparable to Ricky Jay, the brilliant magician who plays to small, packed theatres, where he makes his audience feel in the know by letting them in on the secrets behind some of the oldest tricks in the book. The implication is that the ticket-buying mark is now hip to the game, no longer a sucker to be duped. But if the hipster depends on the square for self-definition, and the square's no longer willing to fall victim to the con outside the artificial world of performance anymore, what's to be gained by being hip to the con?

Waits's work raises similar questions. Over the course of three decades, he's created a persona that's equal parts song and dance man, con artist and carnival barker. Except the consistency of his keeping in character transforms performance into perceived reality. 'Tom Waits' is now inseparable from Tom Waits, and it's easy to suspect he likes it that way, at least to the extent that it prevents his real life from fan and media scrutiny. After all, he's really a guy in his fifties, married with children and living in rural California. Not much of interest there. Far better to let the gravel-voiced madman in thriftshop garb of his records be the 'Tom Waits' that strides forth into the world.

The paeans to the seamier end of the street that made Waits's name serve exactly this same purpose. In the 1970s and early 1980s, his lyrics were surreal vignettes told in thick forests of allusions and obscure, outdated slang culled from the likes of Brewer's *Dictionary Of Phrase And Fable* or *Ripley's Believe It Or Not*. But they always seemed to be telling half the story at best. 'When you're making songs," Waits says, "you try to put things in there that are going to sustain themselves over time. Little depth charges that go off later, or things you may not understand. They're like riddles, and maybe you need to get a little older before you know what you were really trying to say." Deciphering a typical lyric, say, from 1985's *Rain Dogs* variously requires a dictionary of slang, an almanac of smalltime crooks, a road map of the rural South, or all three at once. For suburban listener, the album conjures worlds unknown and unexplored – the Otherness only enhances its pleasures.

What sustains Waits this far down the line is the way he synthesizes all the disparate components he has ragpicked over three decades into a singular aesthetic universe. The Californian Country rock songwriting of his earliest years is still there, along with the jazz that informs the best of his mid-70s work. And the phantom barflies haunting the *Swordfishtrombones/Rain Dogs/Frank's Wild Years* trilogy have carried on drinking, smoking and telling tales in the dark through all the albums that followed. In Waits, the theatre meets the junkyard; guitar and piano lurch into harmony with invented instruments like the Conundrum; the European avant garde wanders through the American desert; and his rock concerts invoke the spirits of vaudeville and burlesque. Waits hauls the past forward by the wagonload, piling it up in the present with a clatter and a growled laugh. If it *is* all *a* con, it's the best kind: here's one con artist who never leaves the mark feeling cheated.

Tom Waits constructed his identity from the ground up. He was born in 1949 in Pomona, California, the son of two schoolteachers. "My dad's from Texas," he recalls. "Jesse Frank Waits. He taught me a lot of Woody Guthrie songs when I was a kid. I had a lot of Harry Belafonte albums when I was young. My mom sang in a trio. There was a lot of singing in church. I guess those are my earliest musical memories: being in church and wishing I was somewhere else, like in a donut shop or on a camel."

It's difficult to imagine the dimly lit, smoke shrouded and booze soaked world of a Waits song emerging from his relatively staid background. At high school, he got drawn into rock 'n' roll, playing R&B and soul covers in a group called The Systems. A growing fascination with the writings of Jack Kerouac and the Beats, coupled with a subscription to jazz magazine *Down Beat*, triggered his first attempts at songwriting in 1969. Later that year he was spotted performing them at a singers' night in Los Angeles's legendary Troubadour Club by Frank Zappa manager and Bizarre Records founder Herb Cohen. Over the next two years, Waits racked up a roster of songs and demos for Cohen's label. These eventually surfaced in 1991 on a double album called *The Early Years*, but it's one for obsessives only.

Even so, the collection, whose release Waits never authorised, helpfully reveals he wasn't born with that golden, gravelly voice. In 1969 he still possesses a clean tenor nurtured in the churchgoing Waits family. His infamous growl only surfaced after two years of hard drinking and too many lost nights hanging around pool tables in LA's afterhours bars. Floored by a Waits gig he chanced upon at LA's Troubadour in 1972, David Geffen brokered a deal with Cohen for Waits to release his debut album, *Closing Time*, on Asylum, the label he had set up in 1970. "I was trying to find my voice, trying to find my way," Waits comments on his early albums. "When you start out, you try to build yourself by taking a little of this and a little of that." Released in 1973, it was produced by Jerry Yester, with Waits playing all the instruments. *Closing Time* combined Kerouac's bop prose and Charles Bukowski's evocations of down at heel nightlife with a songwriting style some decades past its sell-by date.

"I listened to a lot of my parents' records when I was a kid," Waits pleads by way of mitigation. "I didn't really identify with the music of my generation necessarily. I mean, I liked The Stones and The Animals and The Beatles and Bob Dylan and all that, but I guess when you start looking for your own voice... I was fascinated when I was a teenager with Gershwin and Cole Porter and Hoagy Carmichael and Harold Arlen and Rodgers & Hammerstein, all those guys. I thought melody was the thing. So I'd been moved by those songs, and in some cases the composers and performers were long since deceased. And here I was, this little teenage kid sitting in my bedroom listening to this record and crying over it."

His romanticised yet striking hobo image of has tended to obscure his multi-tentacled interests in a huge range of outsider and experimental music. Over the years, he has professed admiration for anyone from Arnold Schoenberg and Harry Partch to Skip James, Leadbelly, The Lounge Lizards, Ken Nordine, Brecht-Weill operas, Captain Beefheart, Lord Buckley and Tricky. The thread through all his divergent tastes is a fondness for music with "one leg missin'", as he put it in the *NME* in 1987. "Stuff that sounds unfinished," he continued. "If it's too beautiful, too produced, I back off a little... Songs that are scrawled on the wall with a nail." Later, in a 1993 interview with the American *Buzz* magazine, he articulated the swashbuckling world his songs inhabit. "I've always

loved songs of adventure, murder ballads, songs about shipwrecks and terrible acts of depravity and heroism," he enthused. "Erotic tales of seductions, songs of romance, wild courage and mystery. Everyone has at one time or another tried to live inside a song. Songs where people die for love. Songs of people on the run. Songs of ghost ships or bank robberies. I've always wanted to live inside songs and never come back." Meanwhile, back in 1985, he was pressed for his favourite group. "The Salvation Army," he fired back.

Most of the LPs Waits made for Asylum between 1973-80 were variations on bohemian barfly and freewheeling hobo themes. Some, like *Small Change* (1976, featuring veteran jazz drummer Shelly Manne) and *Blue Valentine* (1978), are evocative portraits of a Los Angeles underworld still largely invisible to a broad public when they were made. Others, like *The Heart Of Saturday Night* (1974) and *Foreign Affairs* (1977), verge on self-parody. In his defence, he was working at the pace of a 70s rock act like Aerosmith or Ted Nugent, delivering an album a year whether the material was ready or not, and sometimes it showed. His best Asylum work is 1975's studio-live album *Nighthawks At The Diner*, the crowning glory of Waits's association with producer Bones Howe. Over four nights, he assembled a jazz group, friends and fans inside a studio decked out like an afterhours drinking den, with beer, wine and potato chips laid on at table for the guests. Having set the mood, Waits, in raconteur mode, embellished his songs with jokes and stories. The resulting album is by turns hilarious, honest and touching, with Waits alternating boozy neo-bop poetry and romantic torch ballads. His adept gliding between banter and song prompted some to question whether Waits and his onstage 'Tom Waits' persona were now one and the same man. True to character, his cryptic if relatively garrulous responses indicated that his life and art weren't entirely separate. As with Bukowski, the downside of living the part of a Bohо poet-drinker is the occasional tendency to project the sodden sentimentalisation of life at the bottom of the heap, as focused through the lens at the bottom of the glass.

Waits's music roughly divides into two eras. The first era spans his Asylum releases. That period ended and the second began the day in 1982 when Waits delivered the tapes of *Swordfishtrombones* to his label. The label's negative response prompted him to take the album to Island. The eventual release of *Swordfishtrombones* effectively relaunched Waits as a metal-clanking junkyard sound sculptor, composer and songwriter – in that order. His Asylum output was largely lyric-driven around themes that threatened to leave him stranded up a blind alley just off Skid Row. Though thematically, his concerns didn't change that drastically after his Island move, *Swordfishtrombones*'s avant clatter of percussion, thriftstore keyboards and streetcorner Salvation Army horns gloriously broke loose from his earlier Beat jazz meets Broadway templates, in the process quelling criticisms of self-parody. This second, still evolving 'junkyard' phase of Waits's music has been especially fruitful, seeing him through his Island years to his departure in 1998, and his post-Island label hopping releases, from *Mule Variations* (Epitaph) to the recent *Alice* and *Blood Money* (Anti).

Swordfishtrombones is a miscellany of drinker's tales about a girl called Trouble; barroom freaks spewing rambling odes to lost love, grotesque tales of mutant dwarves; inanimate objects turning human, and remote pentecostal churches in the desert. Business as usual, then, except Waits had clearly taken his music to a different realm. He told *The Face* magazine that he had been absorbing the metallic soundworlds of former hobo, instrument inventor and polymath composer Harry Partch. With this in mind, he invited Harry Partch Ensemble member Francis Thumm, a close friend since 1969, to contribute organ to *Swordfishtrombones*, if not the chromelodeon he mans for Partch performances. He also brought in British expat jazz percussionist Victor Feldman, who introduced a thriftstore-load of rattling objects such as gamelan and squeeze drums, bells and tincans, vibraphone and bass marimba. Yet when the dust settled on this invigorating breakthrough of a record, for all its innovations, Waits was turning out challenging and more sophisticated musical reconstructions of his familiar downbeat universe.

Waits capped his music's reorientation with the severance of his West Coast ties with Asylum and manager Herb Cohen, followed by his family's move to downtown New York, where he fell in with a circle including The Lounge Lizards' John and Evan Lurie, guitarist Marc Ribot, independent film director Jim Jarmusch and artist Jean Michel Basquiat. The critical rapture over *Swordfishtrombones* did not deflect Waits from continuing to pick his way through the hollowed out wastelands lying at the ass end of the city. Inspired by his new surroundings in the Washington Street area of Lower Manhattan, 1985's *Rain Dogs* is a rambling, hungover trip through a hallucinatory cityscape peopled with life's losers and down and outs. The title "was a word I made up for people who sleep in doorways", Waits told a British magazine that year. "[In] New York when it rains, all the peelings and cigarette butts float to the surface like in *Taxi Driver* when [Robert De Niro] says, 'Someday a real rain's gonna come and wash all the scum off the street'." Waits carried his streetlife observations with him like a box full of memories. "I wanted to do a record called *Wreck Collections*," he explains, "because you know when you're moving and everything gets thrown in the same box? That's always kind of interesting to me. I'm very interested in the work of people like [cabinet of curiosities maker] Joseph Cornell."

Frank's Wild Years appeared in 1987, marking the beginning of Waits's parallel career in theatre. Flowering out of a song of the same name on *Swordfishtrombones*, Waits worked up an impressionistic story of a small man with big dreams, and how they fell apart. In June 1986 it opened a three month run at Chicago's St Briar Street Theatre. The end of the same year he toured the music from the play across the USA, UK and Europe, as documented on the 1988 album, *Big Time*.

Big Time completed the extraordinary sequence begun with *Swordfishtrombones*, where each new album was more complex and chaotic than its predecessor. Waits's arrangements started sparse, his rhythms off kilter, on *Frank's Wild Years*, he complemented his expanded instrumental palette with the adventurous use of studio technology. He had pulled some obvious tricks on earlier songs, such as the treated vocal on *Rain Dogs*'s "Clap Hands". But *Frank*'s album closer, "Innocent When You Dream (78)", marks his entry into serious conceptual play. Compressed and swathed in vinyl crackle, the track sounds like an old 78 recovered from a dusty attic. No longer satisfied with singing the central part, he was now creating the artefacts that Frank had purportedly left behind. He had never before disappeared so far inside one of his characters.

During this same period Waits raised his profile with a series of memorable movie cameos. After making his screen debut in 1978 as a pianist called Mumbles in Sylvester Stallone's *Paradise Alley*, he forged a connection with Francis Ford Coppola while working on the soundtrack to *One From The Heart* (1979). Between 1983 and 1992, he appeared in Coppola's *The Outsiders*, *Rumble Fish*, *The Cotton Club* and *Bram Stoker's Dracula*. In addition, he featured in Terry Gilliam's *The Fisher King*; he was more prominent in Jim Jarmusch's *Down By Law* and *Night On Earth*; and


"THOSE ARE MY EARLIEST MUSICAL MEMORIES – BEING IN CHURCH AND WISHING I WAS SOMEWHERE ELSE, LIKE IN A DONUT SHOP OR ON A CAMEL"





he played alongside Jack Nicholson and Meryl Streep in Hector Babenco's adaptation of William Kennedy's hobo novel *Ironweed*.

Bone Machine (1992) and its follow-up a year later, *The Black Rider*, marked another change of direction. The percussion clang of the former reveals Waits's love of metallic noises, anvil blows and locomotive sounds. Filled with images of apocalypse and rot, Waits's lyrics might have been less terrifying had they been couched in his earlier ellipticality. But with engineer Tchad Blake stirring in field recordings of market streets in India, including the bustle and clatter of bicycles and bells, it refuses the listener respite from its frenzy. After this, the potential of his musical combinations – clattering percussion and vocal rasps, biting guitars and lurching horns, Country-tinged ballads and ranting diatribes – seemed infinite. Death-obsessed and perversely noisy, *Bone Machine* feels like the final severing of any vestigial ties still binding Waits to 60s singer-songwriter conventions. With repeated listening, songs emerge from beneath its rattles and howls, but only after they've struggled through thickets of noise and distortion. Some read the scars resulting from that passage as a mark of the album's gravity.

In spring earlier this year, Waits came out of hibernation toting *two* new albums, released simultaneously, called *Alice* and *Blood Money*. Both of them are based on music for his theatre collaborations with director Robert Wilson, underlining how theatrical artifice has always been a major component of the Waits persona. An early 1980s TV performance pictures him leaning against a stage prop lamppost declaiming "Romeo Is Bleeding" between puffs on a cigarette, as his jazz group rams the music home. Today, Waits shrinks from such memories. "It's like looking at pictures of yourself when you were a kid," he shudders. "But there's always been that kind of element, trying to do something to the songs that makes them visual, otherwise folks could stay home and listen to the records." On the album and film both called *Big Time*, documenting a late 80s tour, he strutted the stage like a carney barker, ranting his lyrics through a megaphone. To promote *Mule Variations* (2000), he staged a similarly dramatic roadshow over two- and three-night theatre stands rather than in clubs. The album's release occasioned an appearance in the VH-1 cable TV channel's *Storytellers* series, where pop and rock songwriters perform tunes and discourse on their origins. Waits's episode was ramshackle and hilarious, replete with anecdotes about stolen cars, teenage girlfriends and sidekicks with improbable nicknames, that confirmed his affection for traditional music hall values. "I guess I like the rudimentary nature of it," he confesses. "It's just you. You go out there and do your stuff without a whole lot of tricks. You can't come in for a close-up, you can't do a big dream sequence, you're kind of left with real traditional tools and devices at your disposal."

Waits had already enjoyed a long association with the movie industry, both as an actor and soundtrack artist, when he began his theatre work in 1986 with a three month run of *Frank's Wild Years* in Chicago. Four years later he collaborated with Robert Wilson on *The Black Rider*, a German folk tale transformed into a metaphor for addiction, its libretto jointly written by Waits and William Burroughs. Burroughs's routines are similarly permeated with the grifter's slang and the conman's patter; he also wrote an introduction for *You Can't Win*, the autobiography of early 20th century con artist Jack Black. One way or another, the Burroughs-Waits songwriting team seemed inevitable.

In 1991, Wilson cemented their relationship with the first try-outs for what would become *Alice*. Waits comments, "[He's] one of those innovative guys that's

PHOTO (1986): ADRIAN BOOT





more like a surgeon or an inventor. He slows everybody down so it's like an underwater ballet." Weirdly lit and glacially paced, some of Wilson's more avant garde productions recall the late plays of Samuel Beckett, where characters are reduced to heads protruding from wastebaskets, or disembodied mouths uttering mantras of despair. Similarly, some Waits songs, on *Mule Variations* in particular, recall Beckett's nameless protagonists with their mix of resignation and vestigial optimism. *Mule Variations*'s standout "Cold Water", is a perfect example, being one of the few Waits songs to actually feature an explicitly homeless narrator: *"I look 47 but I'm 24/Well, they shooed me away from here the time before/Turn their backs and they lock their doors/I'm watchin' TV in the window of a furniture store."* The track sounds an uncanny echo of Beckett's *Texts For Nothing*: "Suddenly, no, at last, long last, I couldn't any more, I couldn't go on. Someone said, You can't stay here. I couldn't stay there and I couldn't go on."

An immeasurably important factor in Waits's stylistic shift is his 22 year marriage to Kathleen Brennan. When they met in 1980, he was 30, disillusioned and struggling with alcoholism. He had just returned to LA after a few months in New York, where he had ended an intense relationship with singer Rickie Lee Jones, and was at a low ebb. Even so, he had a big project to complete: composing the soundtrack for Coppola's *One From The Heart*, for which he was given an office at the producer-director's Zoetrope Studios, where Brennan worked as a script editor. They were married within four months.

"My wife's been great," he has said, "I've learnt a lot from her. She's Irish Catholic. She's got the whole dark forest thing living inside of her. She pushes me into areas I would not go, and I'd say that a lot of things I'm trying to do now, she's encouraged." He has also characterised their relationship thus: "I'm the prospector, she's the cook. She says, 'You bring it home, I'll cook it up'. I think we sharpen each other like knives."

Brennan has been contributing to his records since *Swordfishtrombones*, at first with the odd co-written lyric but gradually building up to full partnership on *Blood Money*. Over time, she has crossed deep into Waits's junkyard to the point where it's no longer possible to work out who does what.

Today, Waits laughs at the idea of a two-headed songwriter, even as he agrees with it. "I think when you live with somebody," he says, "it's like borrowing the same ten bucks from each other, you know? When it comes to ideas, what you should do here, what you should do there... she knows a lot, and she's the only one of us that knows how to read music." Returning to writing without her, he asserts, would be a doomed endeavour. "When it comes to who does what, we kind of throw it all in the pot, I guess. But when you locate certain things in the music, whether it's the meadow or the cruise ship or the dive or the rapture or the clouds or whatever it is, it's something that you kind of share evenly, you know. *Alice* and *Blood Money* are kind of like twins, or like Cain and Abel a little bit, and we wrote and recorded them together and endured the arduous process of recording these things together, which is a long process."

They might be twins, but eight years separates the stage premiere of *Blood Money* in Copenhagen, Denmark at the end of 2000, and the songs of *Alice*, which date from 1992, when it opened in a Hamburg theatre. Waits doesn't offer much explanation as to why the *Alice* material sat around for a decade before it was recorded, except that the songs were stuffed in a box until it seemed time to come out. Indeed, they were so forgotten that he had to buy a bootleg CD of his original 1991 *Alice* demos to remind himself of their quality. "I'm just glad to have all these people out of my head that weren't paying rent," he says of the songs. "I'm tellin' 'em, 'Go on out there and make Dad some money'."

For *Blood Money*, Waits didn't so much adapt Georg Büchner's unfinished 1837 play *Woyzeck*, a claustrophobic, proto-expressionist tale of jealousy, madness and bloody retribution, as transform it into a raving indictment of life itself. Appropriately, it kicks off with "Misery Is The River Of The World", which pits a marimba against a grunting bass clarinet, while periodically interjecting a spiralling piano line reminiscent of The Residents. The song primes the album's thick stew of resignation and rage. Waits isn't content to grumble when he can froth and kick the walls. "Coney Island Baby" (not the Lou Reed song) and "All The World Is Green" offer hopeful glimpses of romanticism, but the album's overwhelming tone is defined in songs like "God's Away On Business" and "Everything Goes To Hell". Lyrics like *"I'd sell your heart to the junkman, baby/For a buck, for a buck/If you're looking for someone to pull you out of that ditch/You're out of luck, you're out of luck"* are expelled, one gruff word at a time, like a bulldog coughing up phlegm. Even the album artwork suggests damnation and entrapment. Jesse Dylan's photographs of a tuxedoed, wild-haired Waits fill the CD booklet, lit in a sulphurous yellow and shot in a hallway narrower than most shower stalls.

Alice isn't as selfconsciously Waitsian, as calculatedly off-kilter, as *Blood Money*. The opening title track is a jazz ballad about obsession, with a muted trumpet echoing Waits's lyrics over piano, tenor, bass and brushed drums. It's the straightest jazz tune he's recorded for more than 20 years. Numbers like "Kommienezuspadt"and "Table Top Joe" aside, *Alice* is a subdued, almost mournful journey through dreamlike landscapes of doomed love. As the least American-sounding of his albums, it's a genuine surprise.

Since *Bone Machine*, Waits has been cultivating an image somewhere between Captain Beefheart and Harry Partch, going so far as to build a Partch-like instrument he called the Conundrum for the song "In The Colosseum". Even so, *Alice* has no real place in Waits's 'American Ramshackle' universe. It's a European album, redolent of Weimar and Weill, swathed in French horn and Stroh violin (a 19th century instrument with an attached horn that allows string players to be heard over the brass section), which makes few obvious concessions to modern technology. Indeed, sounding like an operetta recorded on period instruments, it's also the least 'rock' album in Waits's catalogue.

One aspect noticeably absent from both new records is the curious moral streak that had emerged on 1999's *Mule Variations*. With song after song extolling the virtues of home and hearth, stability and security, the album ends with the gospel-like "Come On Up To The House", which is as close to a hug and a glass of warm milk before bed that emotional expression is likely to get in Waits's universe. If such songs suggest that Waits has softened or become a sentimentalist, *Mule Variations* more positively contains a perceptible drift towards the lyrical and musical plain-spokenness of early American folk music. But his embrace of an explicit, weird Americana entails dragging folk, Country and blues into a junkyard and slapping them together with rivets and a blowtorch. Waits coined the term "surrural" to describe not only the music, but the circumstances of its recording as well.

If *Mule Variations* was a sentimental diversion,

FACING PAGE STILL FROM THE MOVIE *BIG TIME*, 1988 (TOP), THE CAPED CRUSADER, 2002
THIS PAGE ON STAGE, MID-90S (TOP) AND CIRCA *RAIN DOGS*, 1985

writing for the theatre soon toughened Waits up again. Songs, he says, "need to both reflect the world and try to improve on it at the same time", but then confesses to turning artistic responsibility on its head. "That's what I always loved about Kurt Weill," he comments. "He seemed to take beautiful melodies and tell you terrible things, which I always loved. It seemed like smuggling a knife cooked inside a cake."

The illusion – the con – at the heart of so much of today's music is the creation of a 'performance' that never really existed. Sampling, overdubbing, endless retakes and the careful paring away of errors all contribute to the deception. Waits uses methods commonly deployed in the manufacturing of pop idolatry, even if he's after something other than gloss or sheen. He manipulates sounds to make them *worse*, not better. He'll play an electric guitar through the cheapest amp available, recording it on a boombox's condenser microphone to plug into the mix as a jagged shard of noise perched on top of a piano-driven torch song. Or he'll lay down his vocals in the studio parking lot, only to discover later a rooster crowing in the background.

Yet Waits downplays the role of studio artifice in his music. "I guess, ultimately, arrangements are kind of like jewellery," he speculates. "You really have to look at the bare bones of the song, and it comes down to harmony and melody for me, because I'm a songwriter. It has to stand up by itself without any filigree, without any stripes in the tie, without any uniform on at all. I usually just look at that, see if this thing's gonna work as a song. When you're making songs, you kind of wait for that moment when it can stand up without crutches, and then you go, 'OK, you're done, buddy. Next'. But the unusual sound sources is something I started doing about 20 years ago, I guess, started trying to look for music that felt more like I felt inside, and I guess to a certain extent that became instruments that either I'd never heard before or items that had never been referred to as instruments at all. I get a kick out of it. I find it pleasing."

His professed innocence is disingenuous, to say the least, given how Waits is a proven master of the recording studio. For decades, recording was all about faithfully documenting an authentic performance. But even before the advent of multitrack mixing desks, trickery was evident. Sound effects machines ruled radio drama, just as Foley artists continue to recreate bits of sound the microphone missed on movie sets.

Waits is fascinated by the illusionistic nature of sound effects. "I went into Columbia Broadcasting's basement," he recounts. "They had all this stuff set up that they'd used in the radio days. They had wind machines, and thunder machines, every conceivable device to create movies for the ears, really. That was really thrilling for me, how they got those sounds." His journey through the more mysterious zones of American music has turned him into something of a sonic archivist. He has even bought a wax cylinder player. "It's got amazing stuff in it," he says. "I just brought it home. I'm anxious to look here and see what I've got. I don't even know. Like, all kinds of bizarre stuff that I'm assuming never made the transition to vinyl. Some of 'em are from 1910."

His choices, as an arranger, are fascinating precisely because of their innately deceptive nature. With exquisite care he constructs sonic objects piece by piece, while deliberately making them sound tossed off and artless. His songs strive for the aura of field recordings, junk sculpture or Duchampian readymades, even as they're thoroughly crafted.

"I started listening to the music I was hearing inside myself," he explains. "Things that may not even be considered music. And then I realised that I like old records... At some point, I think I married the quality of the recording to the music on the record. So if it was an old, scratchy 78, I couldn't hear it any other way. I married that noise to the music and I started looking for some of those things for myself in the studio. 'Let's squeeze that down, or drag that chair across the floor and put a mic on that, or let's record this outside.' I started asking questions. There's more than one way to skin a cat. Of course I realised that's what everyone does in the studio to a certain extent."

Waits has always been interested in exotic and invented instruments. For proof, read his introduction to Bart Hopkin's book/CD collection *Gravikords, Whirlies And Pyrophones*. *Blood Money* names a track after its most unusual instrument, a 1920s calliope. "[Bassist] Greg Cohen's my brother-in-law," Waits offers, explaining how he got his hands on one of these unwieldy mechanical steam whistles. "He heard a calliope on the back of a flatbed at Stanford University, and he knew his wife would kill him if he bought one. So he gave me the number. He said, 'You buy it, let your wife kill you. At least it'll be in the family – I can come visit.'

"It needed a lot of work. It's got 57 whistles. The sound is incomparable. You can scream right at the keyboard of a calliope and not be heard. It's pneumatic. There's a motor in another room. Actually, a background in car repair is gonna help you more in working on a calliope than a background in music. It's pretty amazing. They can be heard up to five miles away. So you can imagine what it sounds like when you're standing in front of it. It's like standing in front of a train when it's blowing its horn, and it's relentless, and there's no dynamic. It's either on or off. There's no pedal. That's why people used to say, 'Never let your daughter marry a calliope player'. They're all nuts and they're all deaf. Out of their minds. So it's really a remarkable experience to play. I'm not allowed to play it around here. I have neighbours. It's like a car up on blocks right now. Like a muscle car on blocks."

"I like my music with germs on it," Waits says of his methods. 'Whatever you like, that's what you like. I'm usually looking for something outside of the frame. At a certain point I realised, why are we trying to close the doors and block out the world? I *like* the way the world sounds." His backwoods naturalism has a certain Zen charm, but in its own way it's as ersatz as showbiz, as the glossiest Eurovision Song Contest entry. Waits is merely pressing a different set of mental and emotional buttons in his audience. He's filling a need for freakishness, for dusty tents and 'pickled punks' (the carnival term for deformed foetuses exhibited in jars). It's a show as meticulously constructed as 'digital dirt', the movie industry's term for the attempt to make computer-generated spaceships and future cities look lived in, Waits, by contrast, wears a distant generation's technological handicaps like a crown fished from a dumpster, using every contemporary sonic trick to make his records sound like they were etched onto discarded acetate in a burning barn.

Like the conman for whom the coup de grace is the revelation of his trick to the mark he's just about to sting, Waits calls attention to the artifice in his work. "Everything You Can Dream", from *Alice*, begins with a train whistle embedded in the vinyl crackle that gives away its source as an old sound effects record. Why did he choose a damaged recording rather than a pristine digital sample? "It's like knocking things out of focus just a little bit, just enough, or distressing something," Waits counters. "I love hearing that. It's interesting how it's something that everyone used to complain about with records. 'Don't scratch your records, keep 'em clean', and all that. But now it's become part of the journey back, in order to spin the part that we bring forward with us." □ *Alice* and *Blood Money* are out now on Anti

"WHEN YOU'RE MAKING SONGS, YOU WAIT FOR THAT MOMENT WHEN IT CAN STAND UP WITHOUT CRUTCHES, AND THEN YOU GO, OK, YOU'RE DONE, BUDDY. NEXT"



Charts

Playlists from the outer limits



Leif Elggren's *New Jerusalem* installation at the Pierogi Gallery, New York (see page 24)

Three Imaginary Charts

Top 5 Improv tracks

Rxlex Nörman
Rutenstöb
Bohei Productions Ltd
Keiner Weiß Was
Schhhhhh
Trigora Flurateur 37
Blönnüs Tormandu
P (3 ??) – 1?
A Klarsicht Concrete
Live At Proof's

Top 5 upcoming Mille Pleteaux releases

Timberclick
DSP Shuffle
Woytila Roof
Cold Funk
Xerox
1.0 1 50
Römso Grams
Hejtenstett
Bartätzko
Down There

Top 5 upcoming collaborations

Björk & Attvenger
Wasa Bini Kiri
George Michael & Senking
Careless Knister
Vonda Shepard & Alexander Balanescu
Je T'Aime (Moi Non Plus)
The Modernist & Status Quo
Rocking All Over The World
Alice Coltrane & Sandoz
Shri Tribe Sitar Ram Dub

Compiled by E Ehlers, O Kamik, B Latak and G Odijk

Encore Records 15

Jenny Sheinman
The Rabbi's Lover (Tzadik)
Cinematic Orchestra
Every Day (Ninja Tune)
Baby Dee
Love's Small Song (Durtro)
Rapoon
Pell Mell (Staalplaat)
AALY Trio/DKV Trio
Double Or Nothing (Okka)
Henry Flynt
Spindizzy (Recordad)
MC5
American Ruse (Total Energy)
Issa Bagayogo
Sya (Six Degrees)
mum
Finally We Are No One (Fat Cat)
David Tibet
Music From The Horse Hospital (private CD-R)
Radio Birdman
Radio's Appear (Citadel)
Jazzanova
In Between (Compost)
John Zorn
IAO: Music In Sacred Light (Tzadik)
Fly Pan Am
Ceux Qui Inventent N'ont Jamais Vécua (Constellation)
Pere Ubu
St Arkansas (Glitterhouse)

Compiled by Merk Logan, Encora Records, Kitchener, Ontario, Canada. www.shirleycollins.com

Bimbo Tower 15

Ich Bin
We Came To Reign (Pnau)
Albert Marcoeur
Plusieurs Cas De Figure (Label Frères)
Geza X
You Goddam Kids (Dyonysus)
C Ptak
Prepare Yourself (Heresae)
Erno Kiraly
Spectrum (Autobus/Trace)
Ruth
Polaroid/Roman/Photo (Fractal)
Kotobuki Hikaru
Mosaic Via Post (Capr)
Von Lmo
Are You Ready For... (Munster)
Deerhoof
Halfbird (Menlo Park)
Various
The Kingdoms Of Elgaland-Vargaland
(Ash International)
Wire
Read & Burn (Pink Flag)
L'Orchestre Inacheve
L'Egout Des Egouts (Trace Label)
Sun Ra And His Solar Myth Arkestra
The Solar Myth Approach Vol 2 (Actuel/Get Beck)
Wolf Eyes
Dread (Bulb)
Totsuzen Danball
Totsuzan Danball (Oz Disc)

Compiled by Franq de Quengo & François Aumeunier
Bimbo Tower, 75011 Paris, France

The Office Ambience

Elaine Radigue
Adnoa I III (Table Of The Elements)
Jaques Tati
Jour De Fete (Naïve)
Kevin Drumm & Lasse Marhaug
Frozen From Blizzard Winds (Smalltown Supersound)
Amalgam
Prayer For Peace (FMR)
Bill Wells Trio
Also In White (Geographic)
Kuu Sumun Pro Feetta
Kukin Keappiaan Selessaan Kantaa (Sähkö)
Derek Bailey & Susie Ibarra
Bids (Incus)
Pita
Get Down (Mego)
John Zorn
IAO: Music in Sacred Light (Tzadik)
The Magic Carpathians Project
Ethnocore 3: VAK (Fly Music)
William Parker & Little Huey Creative Music Orchestra
Raincoat In The River (Eremite)
Wire
Read & Burn (Pink Flag)
Alexei Borisov
Before The Evroremont (N&B Research Digest/Avanto)
Nurse With Wound/Current 93
Sounds From The Horse Hospital (PanDurtro)
Keith Fullerton Whitman
21 30 For Acoustic Guitar (Apartment B)

Compiled by *The Wire* Sound System

We welcome charts from record shops, radio shows, clubs, DJs, musicians, labels, readers, etc. Email charts@thewire.co.uk

Reviews



PHOTO: REDFERNS

Femme fatale: The Velvet Underground and Nico reviewed in Soundcheck

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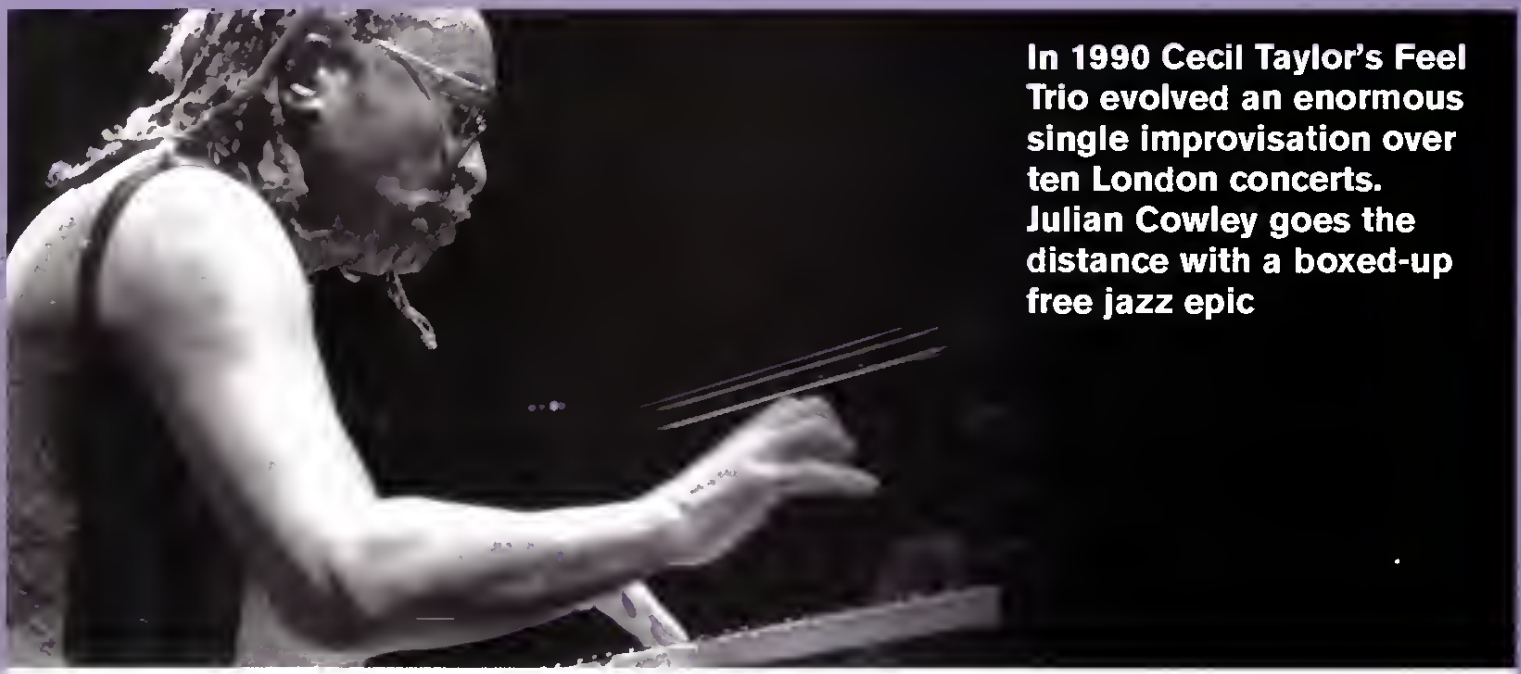
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Brattleboro, USA
Peter Hammill
London, UK
Sounding The Margins: 70th Birthday Of Pauline Oliveros
San Francisco, USA
Mutek
Montreal, Canada
LMC 11th Annual Festival of Experimental Music
London, UK

Soundcheck

This month's selected CDs, albums and singles



In 1990 Cecil Taylor's Feel Trio evolved an enormous single improvisation over ten London concerts. Julian Cowley goes the distance with a boxed-up free jazz epic

Ten days that shook the world: Cecil Taylor

CECIL TAYLOR FEEL TRIO
2 TS FOR A LOVELY T
CODANZA ONE 10XCD

If any small group warrants the issue of a ten CD set, it's pianist Cecil Taylor's Feel Trio, with William Parker on bass and Tony Oxley on percussion. Each of them could probably go that kind of distance alone, and together their energy, mass and intricacy readily match the scale of the challenge. Earlier, acclaimed trio releases *Looking* and *Celebrated Blazons* (both on FMP) appear like hors d'oeuvres; now Codanza is serving its enormous main course. This huge, enthralling box preserves the trio's ten performances before a club audience during a week in London in 1990.

Taylor has come up with disc titles, each packing its own definition: "Epicritic (Pertaining To Cutaneous Sensitivity)"; "Peduncle (The Support Of An Inflorescence)"; "Logozo Scampers (Tortoise)", and on. Every night the trio went out, the atoms fell differently, but the discs reveal a close family relationship. Ten restless, volatile performances, ten extemporised compositions merge in a single epic, and the CDs chart an odyssey of linked episodes culminating in a solitary massive utterance filtered through multiple voicings.

The trio circle around their basic musical material in a rolling progress, nudging it towards exhilarated exhaustion. Their constant, tireless reworking evolves recurrent patterns of events and their variants, peppered with oddities, diversions and countless excitements. By definition, epics project identity large and, cumulatively, *2 Ts For A Lovely T* confirms the style and substance of these three authoritative musicians. Aged 60 at the time it was recorded, Taylor has stayed utterly true to himself. In his sleevenotes, Richard Cook observes that the pianist's music has a thrilling "sense of inevitability". Indeed, Taylor has always sought to follow the inner dictates of the music as he's playing it, responding generously and at lightning speed to each instant. Meanwhile, the options blocked out by his quicksilver decisions never kick back and threaten the integrity of what he has created. His style has yet to be compromised, although it has grown in subtlety, and has inclined increasingly to acknowledge, by allusion and implication, lessons learnt from valued precursors, in particular Duke Ellington and Thelonious Monk.

Early responses to Taylor's music emphasised the energy flow, and it remains a key aspect. Increasingly, his choreographic sensibility and integrative constructional sense enable him to organise the flow on multiple levels, and both these qualities loom large across the expanse of *2 Ts For A Lovely T*. "Epicritic" starts with the muscular statement of motifs that recur throughout the piece's development over the ten discs. They are as concentrated as Monk's knotty phrasing, if more oblique and not so memorable melodically. Taylor teases them apart, drawing them thin with breathtaking rapidity, or condensing them into thick clots and clusters that open out along other dancing lines. Each piece follows a comparable logic, defining cells, pressuring them to erupt in swirling mutations. A striking cadence, rhythmic eccentricity or odd interval raises a jazz ghost, but he doesn't linger to reminisce – intimation is as close as he gets to imitation. His old urgency is undiminished in this affirmation, as is timely venom.

Behind Taylor, taking the drum seat once occupied by the titanic figures of Sunny Murray and Andrew Cyrille, Tony Oxley is resolutely his own man, and as such proves a superb counterbalance to the kinetic power of the pianist's tumbling runs, studded with hefty architectonic blocks. The symbiosis initiated on their FMP duo album *Left Palm Hand*, recorded in 1988, deepens over these ten performances. Given the often cited observation about Taylor playing his keyboard like BB tuned drums, it's tempting to add that Oxley in part approaches his kit as if it were a piano. The generation of rhythm, for Oxley, appears everywhere on this set to be equally functions of colour and textural variation. The augmented timbre range of his kit, even when strictly acoustic as here, enables him to run a heavily nuanced percussive commentary alongside Taylor's headlong rushes.

Parker is the perfect pivot. A man of enormous stamina, he is ceaselessly inventive, with a big, resonant sound that sits like a stabilising keel within the turbulence. Taylor and Oxley have a refined structural awareness, but their combined energies, full on, can be dizzying. Parker effectively counteracts their maelstrom tendencies. His rapidly plucked and bowed articulations steer the ear through the complexity, offering a sure grasp of the tensions that sustain the music's dynamic form. Few bassists are better equipped physically, mentally or emotionally for a project of such length and without any let-up in intensity. But Parker is always ready to assume a guiding role when a space opens up.

On great solo albums like *For Olim* (Soul Note, 1987) Taylor has demonstrated his self-sustaining mastery, but his playing gains dimensions when he's sparking off musicians of comparable magnitude. His Feel Trio can stand alongside the stunning unit, with Sunny Murray and Jimmy Lyons, which recorded *Nefertiti, The Beautiful One Has Come* in 1962.

In the past Taylor has made remarkable music only for it to be compromised by poor sound. But the clarity and balance achieved on *2 Ts For A Lovely T* keep the trio's imposing identities distinct, making full disclosure of their remarkable understanding, while conserving small details in the playing. A release this size can appear daunting. Listening to ten discs end to end is at once draining and elevating. Epics look like an indulgence in the age of the quick fix. But dipping in isn't the same, even if a quick trip is more practical and offers its own rewards. Three musical lives converged during the single span of music spread over ten club performances – and as many discs on *2 Ts For A Lovely T*. Whether you sample it or invest a full day, what it gives back is immense. □

BADLAND
AXIS OF CAVITY
BRUCE'S FINGERS BF40 CD

SFQ
THIRTEEN RECTANGLES
BRUCE'S FINGERS BF43 CD

BY JULIAN COWLEY

By the time UK Improv outfit Badland recorded their second album *Axis Of Cavity* in 1999, Steve Noble had replaced Mark Sanders as drummer with the trio. Noble's energy and inventiveness, his sense of space and pace engage perfectly with composer Simon H Fell on double bass and Simon Rose on alto saxophone, as they bring fresh life to a range of free jazz situations. Noble is as forceful as he's intensely thoughtful and doesn't disturb the even distribution of weight that marks this out as genuine trio music. They can strut and burn, then shift to contemplative mood; line up small gestures then roll at full tilt; lock smoothly and glide, or grate and spark. Despite their menacing name, a lot of fine-grained interplay and skilful dovetailing goes into the careful collective shaping of Badland's music.

Noble also joins Fell in SFQ. Trombonist Gail Brand, pianist Alex Maguire and Alex Ward on clarinet complete the quintet. *Thirteen Rectangles*, recorded at Gateway Studios in April 2001, presents Fell's *Composition No 51C. Thirteen Rectangles Version 2*. Captured in one breathtaking take, it's an exceptional work. Indebted for its title and structural inspiration to abstract painter Kandinsky, its 14 tracks unfolds in a continuous long sweep. Even though the piece is scored for small group, Fell thinks big, leaving plenty of room for solo playing.

The asymmetrical swing of the matching sequences bookending the work recall Anthony Braxton's writing for jazz chamber orchestra. The music in between draws jazz, free improvisation and post-serial composition into the same gravitational field, where they hybridise and mutate. It's edgy and insistent, charactersed by "neurotic rhythms". The players chisel away repeatedly at Fell's deliberately meagre allocation of thematic material, but he has jettisoned the formulaic cycles of standard jazz composition in favour of "mobile form". Written and improvised passages are heard in combination throughout. This complex, stimulating simultaneity sets up exhilarating juxtapositions and conjunctions that rise through the music's continually shifting layers.

Fell strives to actualise the music he wants to hear but which doesn't yet exist. His creative vision and individual labour might prepare the ground, but it's the personality and abilities of the performers that bring his concept to fruition. He's fortunate to have such dedicated, ingenious collaborators, who each bring a distinctive slant to unlock the composition's abundant potential.

DEREK BAILEY & SUSIE IBARRA
BIDS
INCUS 52 CD

COURVOISIER/LÉANDRE/IBARRA
PASSAGGIO
INTAKT 075 CD

BY MARTIN LONGLEY

These two discs confirm Susie Ibarra's drumming versatility. She's capable of shunting down in an instant from booming bass detonations to near inaudible bell tinkles. Recorded during pianist Sylvie Courvoisier, bassist Joëlle Léandre and Ibarra's short European tour in 2001, *Passaggio* features four pieces taped at the Taktlos Festival in Switzerland, bracketed by two groups of studio tracks. Most of these pieces are short, quick spurts of detailed motion, very tightly sprung. Few gestures are wasted in their pursuit of heightened expression. Courvoisier hammers out dense blocks on the keys, her dark rumbling frequently giving way to a delicate minimalism. She'll make harp strums under the lid, then spill out percussive rolls from what sounds like a drastically prepared piano. Bassist Léandre favours grainy bowing for much of the duration, while Ibarra often responds with tiny gong flashes. By "Fact Two", they have reduced the music to shimmers of vestigial activity – the lull before the jumbling climax of "Fact Three".

For the five lengthy duets of *BIDS*, recorded last year at Norway's Kongsberg Festival, Ibarra meets the challenge of Derek Bailey's electric guitar with a more aggressive approach. On the opening "No Dark", she exploits the slackened resonance and open reverberation of her skins, while the guitarist fiddles with the tiniest deadened strums, foot-pedalling the volume to coax out tailend feedback. It doesn't take them long to reach a scrabbling face-off, with Ibarra cranking out rattling responses to Bailey's forcefully struck crunched chords. Fast strums pace curt snare hits before erupting into a frazzled outburst on the briefer "Shine". The duo unleash a similar eruptive force on most of the epic "Midnight White", breaking for a rare, contemplative interlude midway through.

Bailey has stated that, nowadays, Ibarra is his most frequent playing partner, thanks to recent regular visits to New York and the Lower East Side. On *BIDS*, the ongoing nature of this dialogue shows in the finesse and fine detail of their apocalyptic playing.

LAWRENCE CASSERLEY
THE EDGE OF CHAOS
SARGASSO S28042 CD

BY CLIVE BELL

Lawrence Casserley has been working with electronics since the mid-60s, and has invested much effort in bringing such music to a wider audience. In the 80s he founded the Nettlefold Festival in South London, and the Electroacoustic Cabaret, a cross-media show featuring, among other things, the outrageous improvising of trombonist Alan Tomlinson. In 1997 the Touch label released a well received album, *Solar Wind*, on which Casserley subjected Evan Parker's saxophone to live processing.

Casserley recorded this new collection alone in Amsterdam's STEIM studio. For company he took along Chinese gongs, self-built monochords, signal processing instrument and books: stones by JL Borges and paintings by Antoni Tàpies. Borges's mind-warping visions feed into Casserley's dark, seething journeys, though I imagine Borges's chiseled precision might also inspire anyone in a studio full of electronic equipment to exercise restraint. And Tàpies's fondness for earthy, decaying materials "tickles the edge of chaos", to quote Casserley's notes.

Casserley music tends towards gradually evolving arguments. He takes an improvisational approach, playing source sounds and then transforming them, often in real time. While guiding us into abstract aural worlds, he also likes to stay rooted in physical reality by letting the source sounds seep through. Within the writhing electronic maelstrom of "Ragnarök", he is audibly bashing at gongs.

Casserley, however, is prone to overdramatise, relying on vast reverbs and a heroic, if somewhat old fashioned kind of subterranean vibe. The works derived from vocal and breathing sounds could have been recorded inside the respiratory system of a monster. Writing about his music in the *Not Necessarily "English Music"* issue of *Leonardo Music Journal*, Casserley says his aims have stayed consistent for many years, even if it meant waiting for the technology to evolve far enough for him realise them. Parts of the album feel like a galaxy probe led by Starfleet Commander Stockhausen. But the four static landscapes associated with the painter Tàpies show a different and, for me at least, more interesting side. A lowering horizon, a decaying environment under a swollen, post-apocalyptic sky.. Casserley knows this territory well.

DEERHOOF
REVEILLE
KILL ROCK STARS/5 RUE CHRISTINE
GER017/KRS380 CD

BY GEORGE CHEN

Unlikely as it sounds for a group of primitivists, Deerhoof are making exponential leaps up the food chain. On *Reveille*, their most accessible record yet, the San Francisco trio wrap their antlers around 60s pop without deserting their familiar, noisy stomping grounds.

Reveille marks former Gorge Trio guitarist John Dietrich's first recording with Deerhoof. He introduces a streamlined austerity, especially on tracks like "The Last Trumpeter Swan", where keyboards jab through at seemingly random intervals, as Satomi Matsuzaki sings about angels and the moon. Compared with past Deerhoof efforts (*The Man, The Girl, The King*, also on Kill Rock Stars/5RC), which work up a drum circle overload of spiritual frenzy, *Reveille* is their most composed record. Cagily cloaking their instrumental prowess, they mix noise aesthetics and a Beach Boys/California pop sensibility, which might explain their cult appeal.

On *Reveille*, then, the hunter-gatherers have made the leap into a faerie-laden renaissance, where Matsuzaki can sing a gentle lullaby like "Days And Nights In The Forest" in a childlike voice over guitar-plucked waltz figures. The acoustic pop of "The Eyebright Peddler" and the bubbly "Top Tim Rubies" further erase their freakgroup past.

But nobody wants Deerhoof to be too evolved just yet. They tap a residual, feral pop sense for the rough and tumble of "All Rise", which attains its energetic release by piling escalating joy and overdriven melodies atop the rhythmic force of Gordon Saunier's monstrous beats. "Hark The Umpire" and the noise skit "No One Fed Me So I Stayed" alternate screaming and comedic keyboards with spot-on timing.

This might be the year that Deerhoof won the attention of official tastemakers – for one, Sonic Youth invited them to play Los Angeles's All Tomorrow's Parties this spring – but it hasn't deflected them from taking a less-travelled road. It could well be the only path that calls to them, but it makes for a wondrous ride.

DESTROY ALL MONSTERS
SWAMP GAS
END IS HERE 014 CD

MONSTER ISLAND WITH JOHN SINCLAIR
PEYOTEMIND
END IS HERE 012 CD

NIGHTCRAWLERZ
THE THIRD MIND
END IS HERE 013 CD

BY EDWIN POUNCEY

Detroit anti-rock outfit Destroy All Monsters were spawned in the winter of 1974 by Cary Loren, Mike Kelley, Jim Shaw and vocalist Niagara – all misfit musicians and outsider artists who had been baptised in the sonic waves of such groups as MC5, The Stooges and Sun Ra's ever evolving Arkestra. Nearly three decades and several changes of line-up later, DAM are still opening doors of psychedelic perception to release their personal horde of demons into the world.

Unable to find a record company to do justice to their vision (aside from Ecstatic Yod, the label responsible for 1994's long deleted triple CD), DAM's Cary Loren formed the End Is Here label as a subsidiary for his Michigan based Book Beat empire to release future DAM releases and the original members' various spin off projects. The majority of EIH discs come with handmade packaging and inserts that add a visual and textural dimension to the enclosed sounds. So DAM's *Swamp Gas* comes wrapped in a copy of *Swamp Gas Gazette*, an eight page UFO related spoof tabloid news sheet that contains the lyrics to Mike Kelley's "Dexter 1966" rant (which reveals sinister hidden messages concealed within that year's popular hits) and a transcription of the Sun Ra interview tape donated by Japanese noise artist Nakahara, from Violent Onsen Geisha.

Based on the "great Dexter, Michigan UFO chase of 1966", *Swamp Gas* itself is an eruption of babbling electronics, Stooogeian guitar strokes and psychotronic psychedelia. Sun Ra's presence adds further cosmic mysticism, as he urges us all to listen, *"because by listening you will learn to see with your mind's eye"*. What Ra would have made of his voice and ideas being prominently sampled is anybody's guess, but the way *Swamp Gas* salutes his great creative spirit is similar to MC5's customised take of his "Rocket Number Nine" on *Kick Out The Jams*.

Former MC5 manager John Sinclair guest stars on *Peyotemind*, the latest album from Loren's Monster Island. Sinclair reads from his drug diary in a studiously stoned, echo laden vocal, over Loren and company's hallucinogenic mix, which effectively drags the listener into the poet's damaged but still pulsating brain. Monster Island's heartfelt homage to fellow Detroit improvisor Alice Coltrane, "Eternal Now", and their sprawling accompaniment to Sinclair's poem "Monk In Orbit", are equally trippy. The latter is a live gallery performance which involves Len Bukowski blowing bass clarinet, as well as his mind. As an example of altered states in action, *Peyotemind* takes some whipping.

As does the Nightcrawlerz set, which plucks its inspiration from William S Burroughs and Brion Gysin's *The Third Mind* anthology of cut-up theory. Formed in the late 197Ds by Loren and Barry Roth, Nightcrawlerz lasted ten years. The time was well spent, producing a mass of artwork dispersed through video, photography,

sculpture, drawing, magazine production and sound, some of which is included on this two CD anthology. Here Nightcrawlerz ingeniously weld together the Gysin/Burroughs cut-up technique and Gysin's calligraphic kabbalism to project a dreamachine-like flicker of found sounds and garage rock rooted improvisation.

ERNESTO DIAZ-INFANTE & BOB MARSH
RAGS AND STONES
PUBLIC EYESORE 49 CD

BONNIE KANE & ERNESTO DIAZ-INFANTE
MYSTERIOUS PLANET
PAX RECORDINGS PAX009 CD

LEFT COAST IMPROV GROUP
APRIL-MAY 2002
EDGETONE EDT4014 CD

BY JOHN CRATCHLEY

These three California Bay Area recordings share the common denominator of composer/improvisor Ernesto Diaz-Infante. The two duo recordings reveal opposing sides of Diaz-Infante's approach to improvisation, while the third album integrates him into a larger ensemble, where he is not so prominent.

Rags And Stones pairs Diaz-Infante, on prepared guitar, with violinist/cellist Bob Marsh. The set is an acoustic chamber piece made up of nine movements, inside which the duo conduct minimal, fractured conversations. Their communications are terse by nature, the mood distinctly edgy and tentative, with both players more in opposition than in harmony. Diaz-Infante forcefully and vehemently plucks a range of taut and steely sounds from his prepared guitar, using detuned strings to good effect. Marsh is equally monosyllabic but less vitriolic, producing a plethora of scrapes across the tonal spectrum. However, ill temper and confrontation gradually get the upper hand; and whenever it looks like they might explore sound in a complementary fashion, seeking some kind of reconciliation, a sense of competition kicks back in to upset the balance. The language of their exchange ultimately restricts itself to a harsh and repetitive pool of ideas with diminishing returns.

By contrast, his duo with Woo's Bonnie Kane on saxophone, flute and electronics, verges on the psychotic. On *Mysterious Planet*, two long improvisations recorded for KFJC radio in the Los Altos hills sandwich two shorter improvisations from performances at Kimo's and Static Illusion. The opener, "Stillness Unwinding", starts at full intensity and stays there, with Diaz-Infante in full vocal rant, almost vomiting a demented field holler, which Kane gallantly tries to match. She doesn't altogether succeed but her Echoplexed sax provides an interesting counterpoint to Diaz-Infante's guitar and tape collage work. Strangely, the lack of subtlety in this onslaught exerts a mesmeric effect, as an overall structure emerges from the melee. Diaz-Infante's Website provides an 'artist statement' (always worrying) that emphasising "a playful spirit of innovation". He makes a dangerous playmate.

The more democratic climate of "The Canyon Bottom" and "Foam And Spray" allows Kane comes to the fore with some fine, extreme blowing that mirrors and modulates the spirit of Diaz-Infante's forceful outpourings. The final track, "Underlying Nature", returns them to the original session, by which time things have settled. The ensuing improvisation is much more interesting though no less disturbing, with Kane's saxophone sounding like it is emanating from the bottom of a well, desperately scrambling around for a way to reach the surface. At least this CD pins its colours to the mast.

The Left Coast Improv Group's *April/May 2002* is a curiously non-descript affair. Both Marsh and Diaz-Infante are present, joined by Ron Heglin on trombone/voice, Jeff Hobbs on violin and cornet, Scott R Looney on computer electronics, Jim Ryan on flute and percussion and Karen Stackpole on percussion, gongs and kit. For a large scale ensemble, they achieve a good balance of tones and timbres, and the quality of individual performances is high, with everyone listening as they are playing, and there is no shortage of ideas. Given all this potential, the results are surprisingly lacklustre. What's missing is dynamism and bite. They'll have to develop a sharper sound attack to realise their undoubted potential.

DOMOTIC
BYE BYE
ACTIVE SUSPENSION ACD02 CD

O.LAMM
SNOW PARTY
ACTIVE SUSPENSION ACD04 CD

BY JEROME MAUNSELL

The Paris-based label Active Suspension's first album releases cover a broad area of sonic interest and intent. No obvious mission statement brands the two discs, but Domotic and D.Lamm share a desire to make electronic music with a slight 'pop' sensibility, or at least a determination not to follow the grimly humourless route taken by many hard drive operatives and glitch obsessives.

Olivier Lamm, aka D.Lamm, is the more courageous of the two here, constructing careening music from pseudo-cracked song structures, fractured digital undercurrents, bits and bobs of sliced vocals, and heavily treated 'real' instruments. He sources much of the album from his own piano and guitar playing, which he digitally reworks with esoteric scraps of audio or found sound. One clear inspiration is Fennesz, and the best moments here would rival the Austrian beachcomber's oceans of sound, if Lamm hadn't already formed his own distinctive soundworld. It is distinguished, for instance, by a warm, skipping drone that dissolves into nothingness on a freely adapted version of Suzanne Vega's "Cracking", which constitutes one of the album's highlights.

Domotic aka Stephane Laporte's *Bye Bye* is more traditionally melodic, and it trades in familiar musical emotions. Falling into Ambient's convenient catch-all, his music is often wrenchingly sweet and nostalgic. But, if he cuts to an outmoded design, his deceptively simple, clean lines are far from simplistic. Furthermore, they're mercifully free of sonic clutter.

HAMID DRAKE & SABIR MATEEN
BROTHERS TOGETHER
EREMITE MTE035 CD

BY DAN WARBURTON

This is Philadephia born multi-instrumentalist Sabir Mateen's third reeds and drum duo album for Eremite. In 1995, he and Tom Bruno recorded *Getting Away With Murder* in New York's Grand Central Station, and three years later he made *We Are Not At The Opera* with Sunny Murray. Chicago's Hamid Drake takes the drum seat in this studio session recorded in October 2DDD, the day after the duo played at Eremite's fifth birthday bash.

With Drake's one man percussion orchestra behind him, Mateen can let ideas fly free without having to blow himself to pieces. On "Brother's Together", Drake keeps up a steady 84 bpm pulse that's so tight and funky you half expect Bootsy Collins to come crashing in at any moment. Things finally wind down to a slow ballad tempo at the 2D minute mark, and Mateen's alto rounds off the piece with glorious arching melody lines worthy of Jimmy Lyons. Behind Drake's quietly intricate hand drumming on "Of Mind & Spirit", Mateen explores the dark chalumeau range of his clarinet, and the way his bass clarinet takes off on "Knowing Oneself" is most appositely described by that Muhammad Ali line, "float like a butterfly, sting like a bee". On the closing "New Life Dance", his flute darts playfully about for 12 minutes, even finding time to throw in a quote from *Carmen*, followed by some extraordinary scat singing before switching to tenor for some truly ecstatic blowing.

Drake's playing throughout is quite simply awesome. The influence of his mentor Ed Blackwell – not to mention Jo Jones, Philly Joe Jones and Alan Dawson – has never been so strongly felt. "I never heard Blackwell play any music where he wasn't playing a pulse," Drake told Ken Vandermark in a 1997 interview. "The lesson I got from him was that I could try to play melodic structure on the drums the way that the horn players were doing it." *Brothers Together* takes that lesson a step further. There's enough amazing work here from both musicians to influence generations to come.

FILLE QUI MOUSSE
SE TAIRE POUR UNE FEMME TROP BELLE
FRACTAL FRACTAL016 CD

BY DAVID KEENAN

Alongside Shandar, BYG and Centre Of The World, the Futura label was one of the leading exponents of the new thing in France. Founded by Gérard Terronès in 1969, Futura released records by Barre Phillips, Steve Lacy and Anthony Braxton, while nurturing domestic talents like François Tusques and Jac Berrocal. Alongside its Jazz Moderne series, other Futura divisions specialised in Music From England, Musique Contemporaire and Jazz Et Pop. Otherwise known as the Red series, the latter threw up all sorts of uncategorisable gems in the early 7Ds, most notably Fille Qui Mousse (literally Girl Who Froths), whose reputation was mostly sealed by the terminal unavailability of their solitary album.

After signing to Futura in 1971 they cut *Se Taire Pour Une Femme Trop Belle* in a Parisian studio, but the label's financial difficulties meant the album was never released. The only proof of its existence was five test pressings, one of which inevitably wound up in the hands of Steven Stapleton of Nurse With Wound, an avid Futura collector who lists the first Red series release, Red Noise's 1971 album, *Sarcelles-Locheres*, as one of his favourite records of all time.

Fille Qui Mousse featured on the notorious list included with the first Nurse With Wound album. For many record collectors, Fille Qui Mousse's presence on that list has been a source of immense frustration, only now relieved by their belated official release on French label Fractal (bootleg copies have previously done the rounds).

In the cold light of high street availability, the album is inevitably disappointing, a mere curio of historical interest only to scholars of the knotted history of European improvisation. Quite simply, the music can't stand without the invisible crutches of its mythic status bolstered by the impossibility of hearing it. Tracks flit from weedy modal psychedelia that brings The Byrds' "Eight Miles High" crashing to earth, through collage pieces that match French female vocals and barking dogs, to lopsided percussive workouts topped with the sort of cross-eyed male delivery that would make Frank Zappa uncomfortable. The only really interesting track is the long drone piece "Derrière Le Paravent", whose simulated sandstorm and megaphone noise obliterates everything before and after it. Another piece of the Futura saga might fall teasingly into place with Fille Qui Mousse's release, but unfortunately it makes more of a splat than a bang.

HENRY FLYNT
RAGA ELECTRIC
LOCUST MUSIC LOCUST06 CD/LP

SPINDIZZY
RECORDED RECORD006 CD

BY BYRON COLEY

There was a time when the music of Henry Flynt was unavailable to the average listener. The stuff did not exist outside of a few weird cassettes that could only be procured by collectors with heavy art connections. Today, it's possible to buy seven CDs of Flynt's music, all released in the last couple of years with the promise of more to come, and it is a happy goddamn moment in human history. Not that all of Flynt's music is particularly excellent, or even musically noteworthy, but the best of it is nothing short of amazing. And when heard in the context of the times in which it was created, it's the sort of stuff that can really shatter your consciousness. That said, these two discs are among the strongest so far released under Flynt's name. They both bugger the very air they breathe.

Raga Electric (also available as a vinyl picture disc) is subtitled *Experimental Music, 1963-1971*, and documents some of Flynt's most wildly cracked antics. From 1963 come four pieces of solo vocal skreeking, recorded at night in NYC's Central Park, which range from Schwitters-like glossolalia to truly demented freak-tongue dissemblage. From 1964, there is "Free Alto", a piece for solo tenor saxophone that does not resemble the procedural path of nascent free jazz improvisors (who were attempting to wrestle the instrument loose from musical constraints), so much as it treats the horn as a wild animal that needs to be freed from its physical cage. The difference between these approaches is remarkable. From 1966, "Raga Electric" is a piece for detuned guitar and howler monkey vocals, recorded in the wake of a Pandit Pran Nath concert, although it sounds as much like an exorcism of his spirit as a celebration of it. "Mannes Hymn" from 1971, is a crazed reworking of the American jarhead anthem, as done by a mock-Hindustani singer

Chicago's Kevin Drumm conjures a noise combining the white heat of *Metal Machine Music* and the ferocity of Black Metal. By Edwin Pouncey



Masters of reality: Lassa Marhaug and Kevin Drumm

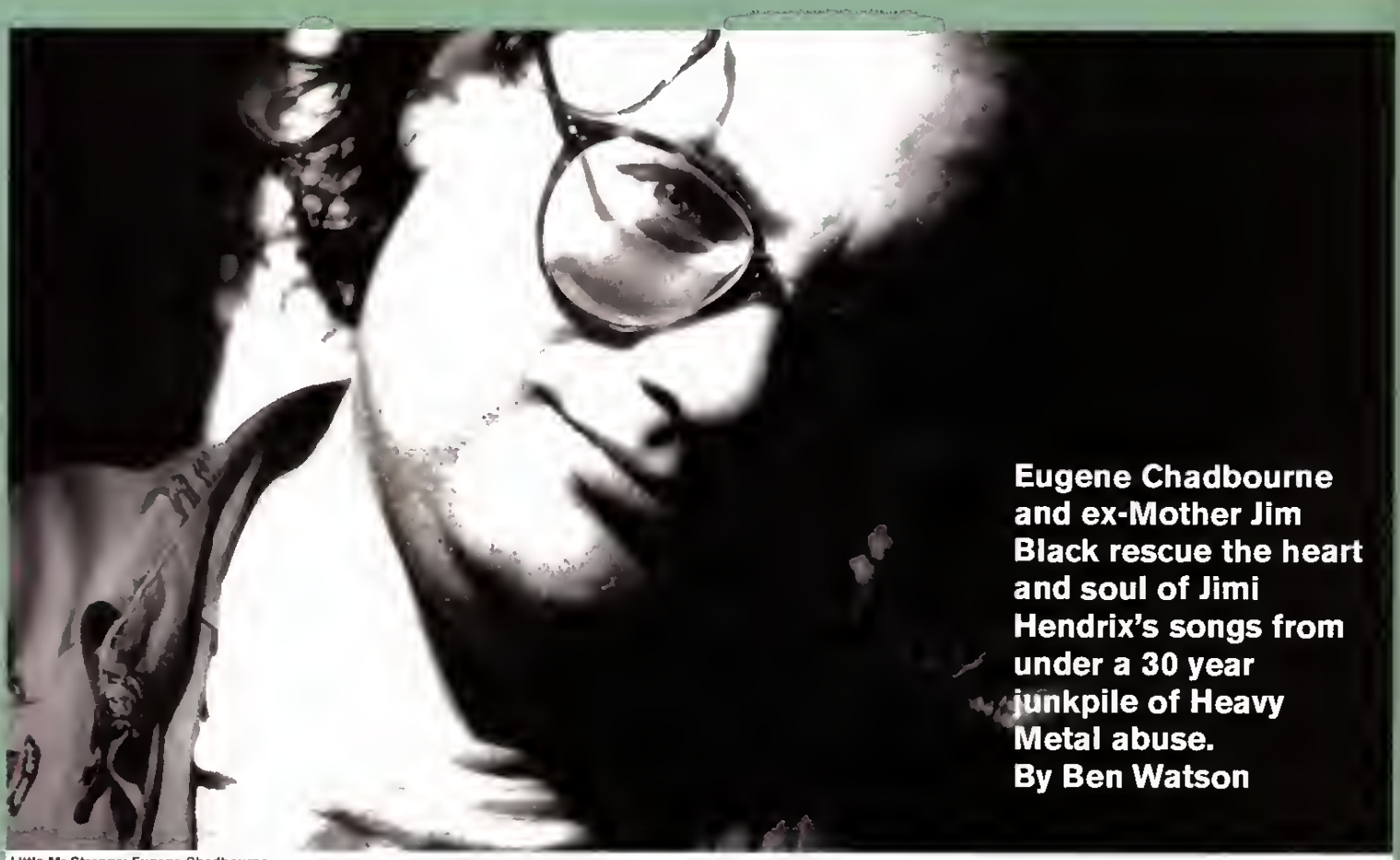
KEVIN DRUMM
SHEER HELLISH MIASMA
MEGO MEGO053 CD

KEVIN DRUMM & LASSE MARHAUG
FROZEN BY BLIZZARD WINDS
SMALLTOWN SUPERSOUND STS059 CD

Tina Frank's cover art for Chicago based guitarist and electronic wizard Kevin Drumm's act of solo sorcery on Mego, *Sheer Hellish Miasma*, gives a loud but typographically tasteful hint as to where he is about to take us. Drumm's initials are stamped out in a bold, gold Teutonic script on a black background. It is a design that summons up painful memories of witnessing a group like Motorhead in action – just to see if they really were as ear shreddingly loud as the music press made them out to be – and how relieved you were when your hearing finally popped back a couple of days later. Like Motörhead's classic aural assault, Drumm wants to blow his audience away by turning his guitar and electronics all the way up to let the sonic flak fly. Onto the brittle black bones of *Sheer Hellish Miasma* are grafted many nefarious musical elements: a solid chunk of Merzbow-style noise; a shaft of white heat from Lou Reed's *Metal Machine Music*; the vicious electronic stab of an early Whitehouse recording; and a secret creative nod in the direction of the massed Nordic army of brain eating, church burning, Odin worshipping Death/Black Metal rockers who make even the mighty Lemmy look as tame and corporately controlled as Ozzy Osbourne.

Drumm approaches the idea of making Metal almost alchemically, by harnessing a lumpen mass of spitting static and roaring feedback and transforming it into something that glows like a hot coal in the back of your skull, long after the final screech of electronic turbulence has dissolved into memory. Although what he comes up with is not solid gold, *Sheer Hellish Miasma* certainly has the glint of a new strain of Nu Metal that has nothing to do with regurgitating the collected works of Nirvana, Pearl Jam or Soundgarden. Instead of returning (yet again) to the standard rock throb and cliched guitar soloing, Drumm allows his instrument to communicate by using its own amplified voice, a growling guttural abstract roar that jolts into action like the engine of a Top Fuel dragster ticking over on the opening "Turning Point" and steadily builds into a thing of awesome, cranium crushing power. The record's highlight is the 20 minute "Hitting The Pavement", where the full impact of Drumm's involved guitar experiment rears up from the studio floor and begins to violently thrash its tail. Here (and with the following, even longer "The Inferno"), the true purpose of Lou Reed's *Metal Machine Music* is re-evaluated as Drumm charts a similar course. What Reed was attempting then, and Drumm is capturing now, is the very essence of rock in its most primal and amorphous state, to unleash the adrenaline-driven rock 'n' roll animal and allow its raw savage beauty to be exposed with no superfluous egotistical frills attached. Reed's acknowledgment of La Monte Young by inserting a drone into the heart of his *MMM* monster has also been duplicated here to produce a surprisingly soothing effect amidst the clashing chromium cacophony. After the ferocious onslaught of these two tracks Drumm dramatically alters the mood with "Cloudy", an almost Ambient instrumental which he eventually clicks off so that the silence can flood back in.

Rune Mortensen's cover for *Frozen By Blizzard Winds* (Drumm's collaboration with Norwegian noise musician and Jazzkammer member Lasse Marhaug) also bears a 'Black Metal' design. There, however, the similarity ends as a more restrained and spectral performance between the two improvisors gradually evolves. Recorded live at Henie Onstad Kunstsenter in Oslo last October, *Frozen By Blizzard Winds* grows in strength from a cool sonic breeze into a howling, tent-flapping Arctic gale as Drumm, on analogue synthesizer and guitar, and Marhaug, on computer, join forces to produce what could almost be a sequel to Drumm's drifting atmospheric finale on *Miasma*. Marhaug's erratically entertaining laptop emissions are the perfect foil for Drumm's now somewhat subdued guitar pulses that lash out only when prodded. If *Miasma* represents the undulating physical side of rock, then *Blizzard Winds* shows how its brain works; where every thought, dream and nightmare is carefully monitored and recorded by these two masters of technological reality. □



Eugene Chadbourne and ex-Mother Jim Black rescue the heart and soul of Jimi Hendrix's songs from under a 30 year junkpile of Heavy Metal abuse. By Ben Watson

Little Mr Strange: Eugene Chadbourne

THE JACK & JIM SHOW FEATURING BLACK PADDY
REFLECTIONS AND EXPERIENCES OF JIMI HENDRIX
INKANISH IR0007 CD

You don't expect a Hendrix tribute to begin with aleatoric plings and twangs on banjo, for these to be taken up by grandiloquent, funkily transposed piano, and for the vocalist to shift between regional American accents like a reincarnation of Lord Buckley, the hippest stand-up who ever ranted into a mic. As The Jack And Jim Show, his duo with original Mothers Of Invention drummer Jimmy Carl Black, Eugene Chadbourne once again shows how cliche busting can result in exhilarating music. This is especially important with Hendrix, since cliches derived from his act have circumscribed a whole genre – namely Metal – and condemned it to political and aesthetic unfreedom. The opener here is "Wait Until Tomorrow" from *Axis: Bold As Love*. Chadbourne's humorous vocal reveals that, no less than Louis Jordan and Chuck Berry, Hendrix could press amusing narratives about romantic dilemmas into song form. Rather than a mere riff and sample source, his songs emerge as verbal treasures studded with surreal images and outbursts of low humour.

The Jack And Jim Show's cross generational empathy has spark and dazzle. At this performance in Italy, they were joined by British free improvisor Pat Thomas, whose version of the bassline of "Electric Ladyland" is a staggering piece of musical analysis. Chadbourne and Black use it to improvise some wacked out bebop funk that recalls New York No Wave's James Chance.

"Hey Joe" turns the vocal over to Black, who sings the alternative lyrics Frank Zappa wrote for the version on *We're Only In It For The Money*, "Hey Punk". Chadbourne, though, thumbs the surging riff that Hendrix invented for his famous cover version. The slow tempo might force Black to repeat certain phrases, but it makes the song a great vehicle for Chadbourne's slide guitar, which he alternates with proper fretting to give the impression of two guitarists let loose on the track. Attempts to replicate Hendrix's sumptuous use of stacks of Marshalls and multitrack studios tend to mire the personalities of the players in turgid sound layers. Here Black's unerring tempi create an ideal platform for Chadbourne's boggling palette of grace notes, gimmicks and musical jokes, while Thomas's piano reductions of Hendrix's myriad sonic colours come over pristine and clear.

Chadbourne's cartoon-inflected singing doesn't simply guy the lyrics. The shy poetry of "One Rainy Wish" comes over with a dew-dappled charm that a less playful version would miss. For some reason, he drops into French on "Red House" (as a tribute to the Hendrix and Deep Purple enthusiasms of Django-style guitarist Bireli Lagrene, perhaps?), but it all somehow sounds inevitable. Since his late 70s tours with John Zorn and Tom Cora, and then with Shockabilly, Chadbourne has been returning to material like this on countless gigs, and he's developed a natural ease with Hendrix's songs that some one-off convocation of superstars could never emulate.

The rendition of 'Axis: Bold As Love" illustrates his special ability with a lyric. For him, the song doesn't exist as a 'piece' to be reproduced in the manner of the classical repertoire, but as the raw materials for its reworking. When he sings *"My Yellow in this case is not so mellow/In fact I'm trying to say it's rotten like me/And all these emotions of mine keep holding me/From giving my life to a rainbow like you"*, (Chadbourne substitutes "rotten" for Hendrix's 'frightened"), it's as if you'd never heard the words before. As a performer, Hendrix was larger than his songs, so you tend to miss the song's sequence of colours (an alchemical drift through the rainbow) and the reference to Donovan. Chadbourne's rendition is impassioned and coherent, but comes from such an unlikely place – a kind of stoned Appalachian Marxist seminar – that you're forced to reflect on the lyrics all over again. Pat Thomas's delirious piano clusters on "Purple Haze" show how the multiple keystrokes of Cecil Taylor (or Ian Pace playing Michael Finnissy) relate to psychedelic power chords. There is a climactic guitar solo on the closing "Foxy Lady", a compendium of Chadbourne's effects so various and inventive, it leaves the commentator speechless. It's all made possible (and framed to be taken seriously) by the rich chords thumped out by Thomas on piano, who also triggers some hilarious vocal samples, and the dependable boom-boom-bap of Black's drums.

It's generally assumed that the 'mainstream' protects traditional values while the 'avant garde' explores the new. Currently, mainstream rock is dominated by vacuous, conformist celebrities whose idea of heaven is a gig at Buckingham Palace. Their only relation to rock's revolutionary past is to patronise it as a source of quaint imagery. any genuine dialogue has been exiled to the margins. Listening to this, though, one's response has to be: "But *what* margins!" This music is crucial. □

with a mouthful of bees It's quite a sound

Subtitled *New American Ethnic Music Volume Two*, *Spindizzy* collects ten tracks of string music (written 1968-83), all of which bear overt hillbilly coloration The cosmic compositional gambits on the first volume of New American Ethnic Music made Flynt's connection to the hills of Kentucky sound tenuously academic Here, the guitar and the fiddle make everything plain. Beyond Harvard, beyond his artistic and philosophic and political theories, beyond his compositional interest in ragas, beyond all the guff, his heart is that of a country boy, hanging in the air glistening and beating to the plunk of a distant string

Unlike the miscellany on his *Graduation* CD (Ampersand), the material here is focused in a way that makes the case for ragas and drones and hill country fiddling all serving a common good Some of the pieces are as removed from traditional technique as any in Flynt's canon, but the programming is excellent, and the individual parts gain a wholeness and authenticity of spirit as they collect in the listener's head

COR FUHLER & GERT-JAN PRINS
THE FLIRTS
ERSTWHILE 017 CD

VAN BERGEN/PRINS/ FENNESZ
DAWN
GROB GROB427 CD

BY DON WATSON

Cor Fuhler and Gert-Jan Prins's duo CD, *The Flirts*, carries a cover shot in close-up of two flowers getting intimate with their stamens For all its implications of intimacy, it's a curiously organic image for an album on which Prins is credited with "electronics, FM modulations, radio", and fellow improvisor Fuhler with "EMS Synthi AKS, turntables, mbiras" Yet, for all the hardware gone into its making, their music has a surprising delicacy

Prins's role here recalls the flying Dutchman of the airwaves in John Cale's "Rise, Sam And Rimsky-Korsakov", on *Music For A New Society*, obsessed with the synthetic quality of the radio voice, he forlornly wanders the airwaves in search of the magical channel that will restore his long lost heritage Prins constructs music from some of the more annoying sounds of the day blips, squeals, howls of static and voices fragmented through an electronic grater This is the stuff of noise, and Prins and Fuhler occasionally hint at an all-out adrenal assault of the type summoned up by Merzbow But the intricacy of their sound constructions is seductive rather than confrontational Their non-musical raw materials resonate to plaintive, almost ghostly effect, calling to mind Demda's line about the growth of technology creating more ghosts, rather than driving them out

Prins joins sometime Evan Parker student and collaborator Peter Van Bergen and Christian Fennesz for *Dawn*, which opens with a striking piano dissonance slowly submerged by radio static and random voices When 'real' instrumental sounds make an occasional return during the following 41 minutes, it's mainly as isolated islands in an ebbing and flowing tide of electronica. Van Bergen's saxophone rises out of a long passage of brooding noise to enter into a struggle with the electronic cypher through which its notes are increasingly shredded As with *The Flirts*, periods of frantic activity erupt through the low level noise that is by turns heavily atmospheric and perversely comforting

At its most violent, Van Bergen, Prins and Fennesz's tense and sometimes manic scribblings generate a digital dementia as unsettling as the jabbering demons on early Diamanda Galas records But as the piece progresses, it is taken over by the fragility and strange beauty of their sound treatments With the swelling, oddly harmonious cacophony of its its final movement, *Dawn* completes the alchemical feat of summoning haunting music from elements of dischord

PHILIP GLASS
MUSIC IN THE SHAPE OF A SQUARE
STRADIVARIUS STR33602 CD

REFLECTIONS
IBERICO CX4005 CD

BY ANDY HAMILTON

These discs stand either side of what Keith Potter, in his study *Four Musical Minimalists*, regards as the 1975-76 watershed in Philip Glass's career. Like Reich, Glass's starting point was rhythm not pitch, but *Einstein On The Beach* (1976) marked the arrival of harmonic motion in his music, and thus the end of pure minimalism. It also heralded a growing productivity, various affiliations with rock music and – to this listener and others – banality Indeed, dispiriting productions like *"Low" Symphony* make you forget that Glass created compelling music in his earlier years.

Music In The Shape Of A Square aims to recreate what Jon Gibson called "Philip's first NY coming out concert for sure", at the Film Makers' Cinematique in May 1968 (that's the date given in Potter's book – the sleevenote says September) In a concert at Opera Paese Gallery in Rome, Italian ensemble Alter Ego faithfully recreated the geometric installations echoing Glass's titles, which the composer called for in the original concert *Piece In The Shape Of A Square*, for two flutes, was set up in a big square, but here it's recorded using overdubbing, making it sound like flautist Manuel Zurria never pauses for breath *Gradus* was originally for soprano sax, but is transposed for Paolo Ravaglia's bass clarinet The more complex *Music In Contrary Motion* (1969) most clearly anticipates the composer's distinctive signature

All the pieces flow from the epiphany Glass experienced during his work with Ravi Shankar, in which he grasped the distinction between Western divisive rhythm and the additive rhythm of Indian music Additive rhythm uses the accretion of small units to mark larger ones, as opposed to the Western concept of "taking a length of time and [slicing] it the way you slice a loaf of bread", so Glass explained. In the violin piece *Strung Out* (1967), where the music was literally strung out along the wall, the additive process is less rigorous than in *Music In Similar Motion*, composed two years later The rawness and stripped down simplicity of these pieces get lost in Glass's later blander work Alter Ego's performances are urgent and compelling, making for an essential disc of contemporary music

Reflections, in contrast, presents arrangements for cello octet of Glass compositions, realised by Elias Arizcuren, conductor of Conjunto Ibérico. The cod Baroque of *Symphony For Eight* – the third movement of Glass's Third Symphony – is very engaging In the extracts from *Akhnaten*, curiously Act III followed by Act I, the cello octet is supplemented effectively by seven voices, percussion and electronics. The *Secret Agent* pieces are less successful It adds up to a rather bizarre offering on the Octet's own Ibérico label

BARRY GUY
SYMMETRIES
MAYA M0201 CD

BY BILL SHOEMAKER

Few recordings come close to *Symmetries* in terms of capturing the totality of Barry Guy's sound This solo album pairs the double bassist and an Irish concert hall whose decay is a few tenths of a second short of being dry, and the results are stunning Engineer Nicholas Parker strikes a fine balance between direct and ambient sounds to capture the vast array of timbres Guy milks from his instrument Across "seven fizzles", a bracing series of short improvised outbursts packed with jarring effects, and haunting readings of Charles Mingus's "Weird Nightmare" and "Eclipse", Guy employs overdubbed harmonics and packs each track with truly dazzling extended techniques On that level, *Symmetries* is a virtual masterclass

Yet Guy's programme is not just impeccably recorded gymnastics, it's also a compelling, impassioned statement Granted, the best entry points into his emotional beating are pieces played straight, such as "Soft Fire", a relatively straight up pizzicato solo that has the same 'heart on sleeve' quality as his perennial "Odyssey", which is reprised here as well On the latter piece, Guy subjects the pastoral lyricism common to both pieces to a process that can be likened to a particle accelerator Fragments splay and textures collide, yet he maintains an emotional continuity that, in the end, intensifies the piece much more than any pyrotechnics.

Without obvious thematic mooring, Guy's methods may initially sound merely turbulent However, the emotional continuity of even abstract constructions like "Whether Why Or Why Not" and "I Have Crossed By The Grace Of The Boatman" becomes plain when heard in the context of the entire album It is in this regard that the liberally interpreted Mingus pieces have a particular resonance, as he remains a paradigm of marshalling the most explosive aspects of humanity through compositional means Guy achieves something akin to the larger than life aspects of Mingus's music through more freely improvised methods on *Symmetries*, a more significant accomplishment than clean sound and polished technique

JONATHAN HARVEY
MYTHIC FIGURES
SARGASSO S28044 CD

BY TOM PERCHARD

The title piece is the latest of several works to result from British composer Jonathan Harvey's long association with IRCAM in Paris. A couple are for tape alone, but many of Harvey's primarily acoustic compositions – realised at IRCAM and elsewhere – also contain an electronic element. Two such electroacoustic pieces here are 1984's *Nachtlied* for soprano, piano and tape, and, from 1989, the chamber ensemble piece *Valley Of Aosta* The purely acoustic is also represented,



VARIOUS
THE LONG ROAD TO FREEDOM: AN ANTHOLOGY OF BLACK MUSIC
BUDDHA/BMG 7446599756 5XCD + DVD + BOOK

Nothing, not even the finer points of Marxism, is as hotly contested as the inheritance of African-American music's moral, cultural and artistic capital. Of course, black music in the United States was born of conflict and repression, and its subsequent history has been marked by claims, counter-claims, backlash, recriminations, struggles over authenticity and selling out, moral panics and beef. Nevertheless, beginning with the songs that constituted a shared culture between slaves in the years before emancipation, black musicians managed to create music intrinsic to the American experience, and this is why it is so feverishly contested. No one was more aware of these contributions than an actor turned singer from the American Negro Theatre, Harry Belafonte. Though he was of West Indian parentage and raised in Harlem, Belafonte was often belittled for riding the 195Ds calypso craze to success. Yet he was responsible for popularising many black folk idioms. Even as his crossover star was in the ascendant, he harboured ambitions to record an atlas of America's black music, which mirrored his own tireless political activities.

With the help of RCA Victor head George Marek, an Austrian Jewish refugee empathetic to the outcast status of African-Americans, Belafonte and his associates embarked on several years of research and recording, beginning in the early 6Ds and stretching beyond that decade's end. Taping was conducted in Webster Hall, a downtown Manhattan dance palace whose acoustics were favourable to singers and unamplified ensembles. The sessions, visited by musical director and choral arranger Leonard De Paur's hand-picked talent, included choirs of adult and children's voices. They were joined by blues greats Sonny Terry and Brownie McGee, Count Basie vocalist Joe Williams, an extraordinary talent from Georgia's Sea Islands, Bessie Jones, and, of course, Belafonte's own unmistakable voice. Together they scaled a towering repertoire, rural and urban, that included minstrel tunes, field hollers, spirituals, ballads, 'frolics' and chaingang worksongs.

Belafonte intended an ambitious staging of black American music's evolution, on a previously unheard-of scale. Unfortunately, for reasons still unknown, the taped sessions went unheard for years to come, languishing in storage until their recent discovery. Belafonte's brainchild, called *The Long Road To Freedom: An Anthology Of Black Music*, has now finally appeared as a collection of five CDs, plus a DVD and accompanying clothbound historical textbook.

Belafonte planned his musical omnibus as a historical document reconciling academic rigour and entertainment in equal measure. The melodramatic performances contained on *The Long Road* are lacking in both regards. With the exception of Terry and McGee, the performers approach their material with the same mannered intensity that Belafonte brought to his commercialised calypso. Renditions of raunchy Louisiana Creole songs show exuberance, but are neutered by De Paur's over-fussy harmonies. Coated in the patina of Webster Hall's echo, the African vocalists and drummers who visited the sessions (*The Long Road* begins with a "Roots" suite of Ghanaian and Nigerian chants) become anthropological figures in a museum's glass-fronted diorama. Joe Williams's enthusiasm for the blues is undeniable, but his diction and stentorian delivery are more thespian than field hand, comparable in many ways to actor Paul Robeson. His take on "Betty And Dupree" builds in volume and melodic embellishment, turning an elemental blues into jazz cabaret material. This tendency colours other performances throughout the set, as with Valentine Pringle's "Ho Boys, Cancha Line 'Em?", a work song whose cinematic reading is abetted by a 'cast of hundreds' chorus. Other entries in the suite of "Ballads And Frolics" are hobbled by the weight of De Paur's showy charts: "John Henry" and "Boll Weevil" translate as something other than the pure bursts of black folkloric energy they should represent. Dressed in stridently upbeat harmonies, they sound like the product of an attempted Gilbert & Sullivan operetta set in Delta country.

Despite spare musical accompaniment – piano and guitar form the core of most instrumental arrangements – a pervasive theatrical air raises the cholesterol level of most of *The Long Road*'s songs. Certainly it seems to work against the purported intent to chronicle disappearing music, coming closest to the surface during staged street scenes (actor Godfrey Cambridge reciting vintage card game rhymes or disc four's "Folk-Minstrel Scene"). Belafonte's urge to re-purpose this music as a black 'classical' idiom drains much of its electricity and verve, lending a lugubrious tone to the most festive melodies. Luckily, the youngest vocalists cut through the stuffy conservatory air, carving their own niche in songs from Gullah culture found by Bessie Jones. The children's choir lifts the project's energy level through Webster Hall's ceiling, stomping and hollering "Dl' Lady From Brewster".

At the very least, *The Long Road* is a testament to its producers' attention to engineering detail, going some distance to justify audiophile claims that the earliest period of high fidelity recording – the 5Ds and early 6Ds – was perhaps its finest hour. The DVD, basically an electronic press kit, describes both the project's history and the elaborate archival midwifery preceding its belated appearance. Mostly, though, the DVD's an extended ad for the paper company 'sponsoring' the sumptuously printed book.

Yet nowhere on either the DVD or within the book is the ultimate question broached: why wasn't *The Long Road* released three decades ago? This lacuna in the project's history casts a pall over the missing in action set. Originally intended as a ten (vinyl) LP box, it would have been a tough, but not impossible sell in the comparatively plum economy of the early 7Ds. Back then, interest in the blues and other black traditional forms stirred up by British artists still hung in the post-hippy air. Did a prescient executive sense that the stiff-backed *Long Road* renditions of rural funk probably wouldn't have altered the subsequent course of black music appreciation? Would black record buyers perceive the whole thing, with its patina of ecclesiastical solemnity, as irretrievably square?

Whatever the reasons, seven years' worth of ongoing recording disappeared into RCA's (later BMG's) vaults, only to resurface 30 years later purely by chance. Long after Belafonte had put the project behind him, the set's DVD documentary, reveals, an executive brought up *The Long Road* during a computer search of BMG's archives for potential reissue material after typing in the keyword 'negro'.

In his sleevenotes, Belafonte claims that many facets of the American black musical experience might have disappeared altogether, were they not preserved by the Webster Hall tapes. His words fly in the face of the glut of reissues during the past 25 years from labels such as Yazoo, Rounder, Shanachie, Arhoolie, Dlo Hat and others (to name only the American imprints), each release bearing a textbook's worth of historical annotation. And even if *The Long Road* had been released upon completion in the early 7Ds, field recordings made by the likes of Alan Lomax and Chris Strachwitz were already available. The latter albums documented black rural music throughout America with great specificity, locating that music in regional contexts, rather than staging hokey recreations in a Manhattan studio.

To his credit, Harry Belafonte, who did so much to popularise black folk music in the heyday of his singing career, turned out to possess an agenda that ran deeper still. *The Long Road To Freedom* finally emerges to make its great case for cultural achievement in the face of overwhelming odds, yet the whiff of mothballs is unavoidable. The sincerity of his intent clings to each word sung here, yet the mustiness pervading *The Long Road*'s five discs has nothing to do with three decades' storage in a vault. Had it contained the authentic goods to begin with, this frustrating box set might have lived up to Belafonte's description of the music it chronicles as a "cultural treasure chest". □

Turning back the pages of history: Harry Belafonte (far right) with Martin Luther King



After 30 years languishing in the vaults, Harry Belafonte's ambitious atlas of black music gets a release. By Richard Henderson

with Holland's Het Trio giving a boisterous performance of *The Riot*.

Harvey describes this 1993 trio piece as a game in which materials are thrown together, clashing and conflicting while maintaining some of their original identity – an idea that's reflected in an anagrammatic title containing its interpreters' names. Although the opening recalls Stockhausen's *Tierkreis*, any melodious complacency is soon shed for a panic-stricken virtuosity. Standing out from the winds' precipitous balancing of materials is the piano's compaction of harmonic units into a 'Mozartian' cycle of fifths – a florid passage whose disintegration dominates the second half.

The CD's longest work, the 25 minute *Nachtlied*, is dedicated to soprano Jane Manning, who performs it here with pianist David Mason. At its centre is a setting of Goethe's *Wanderers Nachtlied*. This near aphonistic poem blurs the line between absolute peace and death, and Harvey augments Goethe's text with two Rudolph Steiner meditations examining life, sleep and afterlife as indistinct stages of experience and existence. Once underway, the music dissolves from peaceful clarity one moment into harmonic ambiguity and the terrified catching of breath the next. Like so much of Goethe's poetry, *Wanderers Nachtlied* was set by Schubert, and delicate fragments of his melodic turns appear here, only to be interrupted by the distorted voice and piano of an emerging tape part.

The music moves into the first Steiner meditation with a hornific motif of wide, striding intervals. At the same time, the tape's nightmarish confusion begins to dominate. But as it turns purposefully less coherent, it also becomes stylistically bogged down. While the soprano's music sounds classically serial, the electronics take on a baroque naffness, the 18 year old tape bearing the unimpressive analogue traces of the early IRCAM sound.

The enjoyable enough *Valley Of Aosta* is an ensemble work that doesn't quite achieve its sensuous objective, which Harvey says was to realise a sense of "living in-colour". More successful is *Mythic Figures*, a tape piece composed in 2001 for the MADM ballet. As well as requesting a new piece, the company wanted to use some of Harvey's existing music. His response was to centre the composition around 'characters' from some of his earlier works. *One Evening*, *Advaya* and *Bhakti* provide backwards whispers, cello interjections and a percussion ostinato. The piece closes with a Tibetan bell tolling over choirboy notes, recalling 1980's *Mortuos Plango Vivos Voco*.

KIM HIORTHØY
MELKE
SMALLTOWN SUPERSOUND STS061CD

BY JOHN MULVEY

Digital approximations of childhood and the bucolic life have become something of a cliche over the past few years. Norwegian graphic designer Kim Hiorthøy sows *Melke* with nostalgic signifiers, such as grainy field recordings, faded guitar and piano loops, unsteady melodies that would be deemed too featherlight by most music box manufacturers. Miraculously, he stops short of including sampled playground chatter.

If *Melke*'s collection of singles, remixes and other ephemera from the past two years triggers profound memories buried in the subconscious, it is not so much revisiting Hiorthøy's hazy infancy as recalling the countless other, admittedly charming, records that have used a similar tonal palette of late. Nevertheless, it's hard not to be similarly taken with Hiorthøy. For the most part, this is easy, sunlit music variously reminiscent of Plaid, Four Tet and, when it gets vaguely belligerent, Aphex Acid. Occasionally, on "Evil Hose, Evil Day" and the hesitant nursery gamelan of "Det Blev Fel", Hiorthøy effortlessly transcends expectations. Twice, on remixes of Kevin Blechdom ("Ready 4 Love") and Jaga Jazzist ("Going Down"), he turns in tinny, faintly subverted preset House that's too whimsical and disingenuous even for these tastes.

JOHN HOLLENBECK
NO IMAGES
CRI BLUESHIFT 2002 CD

THE CLAUDIA QUINTET
CRI BLUESHIFT 2004 CD

QUARTET LUCY
CRI BLUESHIFT 2003 CD

BY PHILIP CLARK

Normally associated with American New Music of a more notated bent, the CRI label launches its new jazz imprint with these three CDs by percussionist/composer John Hollenbeck. Hollenbeck is a fine drummer, whose imaginative backings and unusual palette of colours owe much to his composer's mind. His mentor was trombonist Bob Brookmeyer, and Hollenbeck has also worked with Meredith Monk, Maria Schneider and the trio led by trumpeter Cuong Vu – all testing jobs from which he emerged as a highly creative and thoughtful player. So it's a pity to report that these CDs are so patchy.

The most consistent and challenging of them is *No Images*. It opens with the scintillating Hollenbeck composition *BlueGreenYellow* in which David Liebman, Ellery Eskelin and Rick Dimuzio lock tenor saxophones and 'smudge' their lines to form a single colour. Hollenbeck's kit gives the piece rolling momentum, and the result is a maze of interlocking Pollock-like splashes, in which three individuals subsume their egos and become a sonic mass. *The Drum Major Instinct* uses three trombonists (Ray Anderson, David Taylor, Tim Sessions) in a similar way and is a response to the famous speech by Martin Luther King. As King's philosophical ideas about peoples' need to control their instinctive greed and hatred play in the background, the trombonists follow the cadences and speech patterns of his charismatic voice and extraordinary prose. Hints of gospel phrasing occasionally rise to the surface and the piece sustains its tense and feverish atmosphere for 25 minutes. Grafting music onto such a powerful personal statement as King's is high risk, but Hollenbeck treats the text with humility and arrives at an unusually responsive meeting of music and words.

No Images is completed by two separate duo sets featuring Hollenbeck with Eskelin and Liebman in which the players feel like they are searching for something they don't already know. There's something raw and untamed about the music, but the more recent *Quartet Lucy* and *The Claudia Quintet* suggest that a certain self-satisfaction has crept into Hollenbeck's creative makeup. The Claudia Quintet is certainly the better of the two, but still sounds detached and buttoned down. Clarinettist Chris Speed's outstanding performance rescues the day, and his solo on the opening *Meinetwegen* dissolves into deftly controlled microtonal lines. His clarion clarinet sound blends well with Ted Reichman's accordion, and the disc at least has a unified ensemble sound and direction.

It would be impossible to articulate how much I hated the hugely misjudged, not to say silly *Quartet Lucy*. The sugary persona of vocalist Theo Bleckmann is the biggest problem. He preens like a peacock exhibiting its coat, and his already self-consciously 'pretty' voice is often inexplicably caked in superfluous layers of glutinous reverb. The project reaches rock bottom with his deeply embarrassing recitation of a New Age text. It leaves you to wonder if this is really the same Hollenbeck who created the sensitive Martin Luther King setting described above.

KEITH JARRETT
SELECTED RECORDINGS: RARUM I
ECM 0141682 2XCD

JAN GARBAREK
SELECTED RECORDINGS: RARUM II
ECM 0141652 2XCD

BY ANDY HAMILTON

Jan Garbarek, Keith Jarrett and Arvo Pärt are the Trinity of Manfred Eicher's ECM label, and the bestselling efforts of the first two have sustained the label's more esoteric products. Now they open a programme of 24-bit remastered compilations selected by the artist and supplied, unusually for ECM, in digipack format. The two sets overlap in that the best tracks on both are from Jarrett's European recordings with Garbarek.

Garbarek's selection is an excellent introduction to his work. His perspective brings the listener closer to a grasp of the saxophonist's much misunderstood output. His work can be divided into relatively straightahead jazz with Jarrett, World Music syntheses and the more recent and unexpectedly popular medievalism with The Hilliard Ensemble. Garbarek's 'Ambient' album *Dis* from 1976 – here represented by "Viddene" – precipitated the first major division in critical opinion about Garbarek, and ECM as a whole. One reviewer referred to the "dolorous and God-forsaken sounds [of] .. the Ingmar Bergman of the European jazz scene". The saxophonist's apparent narrowness of emotional expression generated the debate over the cerebral approach of Nordic cool – the "grey voice" which, as one title has it, "it's OK to listen to".

Yet the saxophonist's rich yet keening tone, and his control of dynamics, is utterly distinctive – one authority even finds parallels with the shamanic consciousness in Nordic mythology. Its richness makes a success of the unlikely marriage with South Asian World Music represented by Trilok Gurtu – featured here on the delightful "Song For Everyone" – or with Ustad Fateh Ali Khan's musicians from Pakistan, who appear on "Raga I". Perhaps the strangest synthesis is the haunting track with pipe-organist Kjell Johnsen, "Iskirken" from *Afteniand*, where Garbarek's soprano shows an unusually raw power and stark intensity.

Jarrett is characteristically idiosyncratic in his selection, writing that "I would like to direct the listener's attention to recordings that either have been, in my opinion, heard less than I feel is

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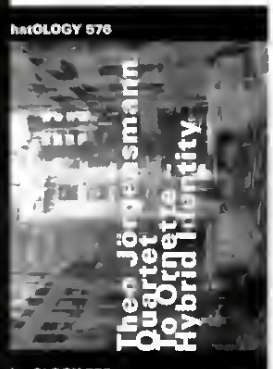
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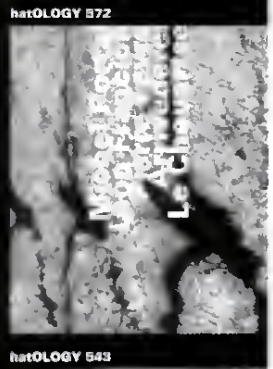
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their due, or have escaped recent awareness ." These include some fairly obscure earlier material, some of which even Ian Carr's biography doesn't rate: the clavichord improvisations from *Book Of Ways*, the bizarre home-recorded *Spirits* tapes with Jarrett on various instruments, and "Hymn Of Remembrance", which features him as improvising organist. But there's more familiar solo piano material from the 1981 Munich and Breganz concerts, and 1987 concerts in Tokyo.

Despite the success of these solo concerts and recordings, though, I don't see Jarrett as the one of the great improvisors. A song based structure, or at least the presence of colleagues, help to rein in his overweening belief that everything he does is touched by divine inspiration. That's why the best material here features the European quartet with Jan Garbarek, and the so-called 'Standards Trio' with Gary Peacock and Jack DeJohnette – especially "Bop-Be" and the lovely "No Lonely Nights". Tracks like these show such an abundance of lyrical invention, crystallised into some of the most beautiful jazz compositions ever produced.

JAN JELINEK
ICE COMPOSITIONS
EN/OF 004 LP

ALEJANDRA & AERON
SCOTCH MONSTER
EN/OF 005 LP

TV POW
AMERICA SAYS FAREWELL
EN/OF 006 LP

BY PHILIP SHERBURNE

Thanks in part to exhibitions like the Hayward Gallery's Sonic Boom, PS1's Bed Of Sound and the Mattress Factory's Visual Sound, sound art has made significant inroads into the popular conception of art. Curated by Bottrop-Boy's Robert Meijer, the EN/OF series takes a slightly different approach. Instead of exploring sound as a question of space, interaction and perception, EN/OF pairs recording artists from the A list of 'experimental' practitioners with visual artists for multimedia presentations made up of a vinyl LP and a visual component such as a photograph or a silkscreen. Produced in limited editions of 1DD, the series follows the art industry practice of factoring exclusivity into its future resale value.

Now into its second trilogy, the series raises some interesting, if problematic, questions. When these artists – Jan Jelinek, Alejandra & Aeron and TV Pow – are already 'commercial' recording artists, what makes their contribution to these pieces 'art'? The relationship between sound and image is even more problematic. Jan Jelinek and Sarah Morris, for instance, did not monitor each other's work in progress, making it a somewhat blind collaboration. Indeed, it's difficult to see the correlation between their works. Jelinek's four pieces are much in the vein of his other compositions. The opening "ICE 695" is a lilting excavation of shirred static and vibraphones in 5/4 time, and the other tracks follow the same sedimentary drift and cool harmonic play, albeit less rhythmically focused. Morris's contribution is a set of production stills, photographed by Andrea Stappert, showing director Morris and crew shooting a film in Miami. Both music and images are beautiful in a cold, incidental way, but it's hard to see a significant link beyond an accidental inquiry into authorship.

The pairing of Alejandra & Aeron with Henrik Håkansson is more natural. Across two long tunes called "Earth Spirits" and "Water Spirits", The Spanish-American duo work in the rustic vein that they have increasingly pursued on their label Lucky Kitchen, combining field recordings from the Scottish countryside with subtle drones and whirrs. And Swedish artist Håkansson offers a stark white print with a plastic bag attached, containing a leaf spattered with bird droppings. Here, the artists clearly share ideas about nature and culture, and transparency and opacity. Possibly punning on the vulgarity of shit, Håkansson's print is called *European Starling (Sturnus Vulgaris)*, and who can say whether this is really starling crap or not?

Chicago improv trio TV Pow contribute three long live tracks, including the brilliantly titled "I Do The Smokin', You Load The Weapons", incorporating strummed guitar, slow rolling percussion, Ambient hiss, a wall-battering drone and the usual quota of clicking and sinewave sweeps. Consisting of long hoots and an endless shower of rattling coins, a piece recorded in a Berlin subway tunnel curiously mirrors the more conventional electronic track that follows it. Angela Bulloch, a Canadian artist based in London, responds with *Worm Hole & Doodle Drawing On 10 Time Codes*, a set of ten laser printed computer images suggesting backlit grids erupting with wires. More inscrutable is the "random 8mm hole" punched in each print, an obligatory 'glitch' seemingly as studied as that in digital music. If it's a wink at critics or a joke on TV Pow, Bulloch is not giving anything away. Like a post-Techno game show, her prints merely blink in rippling patterns of riddles.

MAKOTO KAWABATA & THE MOTHERS OF INVASION
HOT RATTLESNAKES
PARATACTILE PLE11112 CD

FLOATING FLOWER
1ST + 2ND
BLACK PLASTIC SOUND BPS06 CD

BY DAVID KEENAN

The torrent of releases roaring out of Acid Mothers Temple's Makoto Kawabata shows no sign of abating. Every new disc is showered in reissues, which have often extended and even doubled in size since their first exposure. But this is the first time round for *Hot Rattlesnakes*, by Kawabata's new power trio Mothers Of Invasion.

As the title implies, Frank Zappa's guitar heavy 1970 solo album *Hot Rats* provides the jumping-off point. *Hot Rattlesnakes* showcases three heavy instrumentals, with Kawabata's dextrous lead guitar supported by bassist Atsushi Tsuyama and drummer Yoshimitsu Ichiraku. "Theme Of Hot Rattlesnakes" opens with sweltering clouds of fuzz, soon dispersed by Kawabata's guitar. Working with a flatter fuzztone here forces Kawabata into more measured soloing. Minus Acid Mothers Temple's enveloping celestial gush, it's easier to follow his kaleidoscopic logic as he tears through bridges in pursuit of the little moments of flux the trio repeatedly hit on.

Not that you would guess from the title, but "Fnpian Flipped Over Niffy Their King Of Fnppery" is a punked up borrowing from Fripp & Eno's *Evening Star*, with delayed guitar generating static xeroxes of itself. "French Sweet Suger House" closes the set with a crowd-pleasing acid guitar blowout raised through the roof by Ichiraku's double-time drumming and Tsuyama's throbbing bass.

An even better blowout, "Children Of The Drab", is one of three lengthy bonus tracks on the double CD reissue of Acid Mothers Temple's staggering *Absolutely Freak Out (Zap Your Mind!!)* (Static Caravan/Resonance). Taking up where AMT's "Blue Velvet Blues" (from *Pataphysical Freakout Mu!!*) laid off, Kawabata's ripping lead obliterates its sensual stoner pace, while its overloading circuits up the tension, always threatening to blow. If the other two bonuses pale in comparison, "Children Of The Drab" justifies the cost of upgrading to CD. None of these additions, meanwhile, are about to unbalance an already deranged double set.

In contrast, the "In D" extending the digital version of *In C* (Squealer) is a 20 minute desert of sighing tambura and wheezing shruti box that adds little to AMT's original demolition of Terry Riley. But *In C* itself remains a remarkable piece that rewrites the minimalist classic in Neolithic alphabets. Meanwhile vinyl specialists Qbico continue their reissue programme of early Kawabata cassettes with *1st Trip* by his group Baroque Bordello. On one side they come over like a Pink Floyd tribute group sconing electro soundtracks for aerobic workouts. The other side is a primitive 1979 freakout on homemade percussion.

The cream of this quarter's rereleases, however, is *1st + 2nd*, which restores two Floating Flower CD-Rs to the public domain. Alongside Father Moo & The Black Sheep and Tsurubami, Floating Flower have been the highlight of the AMT Gold Series of limited CD-Rs, which Kawabata launched to take up the slack of his ever proliferating groups and projects. Floating Flower is a trio featuring Kawabata on acoustic and electric guitar, 'Yuki' on vocals, violin and electric sitar and Tetsuya Kaneko on tabla and electric guitar. Their extended folk drones sound like a heavily dosed Incredible String Band, with zoned female vocals echoing from the roof of the world.

ANNETTE KREBS
GUITAR SOLO
FRINGES 11 CD

BY CLIVE BELL

Intrepid improvisors continue to explore silence as if it were an archipelago of uncharted islands. Annette Krebs's solo album contains elements that sound like field recordings brought back, unlabelled and half destroyed by insects, from life threatening environments. More prosaically, as the semi-ironic title indicates, Krebs is just playing a guitar in Berlin, "recorded in real time" amid silence and mystery aplenty.

Krebs's austere, minimalist approach provokes comparison with Taku Sugimoto, with whom she recorded a duo CD (for Slub Music) in 2001. But Sugimoto still plays recognisable guitar notes, just not many of them, whereas what Krebs is doing is often unfathomable. Indeed, there's barely a straightforward guitar pluck on the entire album. In keeping with the overall austerity, the seven tracks are named by numbers: "1" is woven from the sound of things being gently dragged and rubbed. This is not so much guitar playing, it's more like weather.

Krebs sounds completely at ease with what she is doing. Hers are not impressionistic effects, but precise placing of musical events. If "1" is Krebs raking the sand of her Zen garden, "2" is

her placing the rocks into the silence. By now we are recognisably into prepared guitar – a firm low end thump, a ringing string hit, a subtle squeeze of volume pedal "3" involves fierce hiss and maybe an electric fan "4" crackles like the remorseless crushing of a bag of Cheenos Towards the end of the album Krebs heightens the unease with some use of tape Wind noise, dragging, rattling and maybe an astronaut with breathing difficulties combine in an unstable collage, redolent of danger

Blending austerity and beauty, *Solo Guitar* is an extraordinary piece of work The unusual packaging – art paper, watercolour, large format – complements this blend well

LESSER
LS-MP3CD-R_1990-2000
TIGERBEAT6 MEOW009 MP3CD

KID606
THE ACTION PACKED MENTALLIST BRINGS YOU THE FUCKING JAMS
VIOLENT TURD TURD02 CD

BY PETER SHAPIRO

30 years from now, when it comes time to pick over the carcass of electronica, what unreleased rarities are the compilers of *Patchwork. The OSP Box Set* possibly going to find to entice fans to shell out for the ten MP6 encoded DVD set? Lesser's *LS-MP3CD R_1990 2000* adds a whole new dimension to the trend for releasing every last little scribble in the notebook This career retrospective, containing seemingly everything except for his *Gearhound* album, is eight hours long – eight fuckin' hours! – and has God knows how many songs The best thing you can say about it is the format it's on one MP3 CD (although this has since been outdone by the wiseass who's put out a three MP3 CD set of all the bootleg mixes available online) It is mostly doodles in the margins of punk electronics dirty, scuzzy, primitive cut-ups featuring downtuned punk rock with snatches of Walter Murphy's "A Fifth Of Beethoven" and Christian propaganda alternating with nondescript indie rock shuffling off to the background waiting for the audience to leave At least, unlike those infernal Celine Dion and Aerosmith CDs, it works on your computer.

Kid606 has a similar tendency to release everything on his hard drive, much of it so simple even a child could do it. Well, that's the point, particularly on *The Action Packed Mentallist Brings You The Fucking Jams*. Unlike the hopelessly twee regression therapy of the Jad Fair set, the Kid's faux naivety attempts to recreate a particularly messy pre-school fingerpainting session The best tracks here, "MP3 Killed The CD Star" and "Never Underestimate The Value Of A Holler (Vipee pee Mix)", stage fights in the sandbox, where Black Sabbath kick sand in the face of Missy Elliott, Ninja Man and Bubba Sparxxx, and where Trevor Horn bullies an Eminem who has sucked on one too many helium balloons There's no ProTools/Cubase micro-editing here, just a fucking mess – like your mischievous younger brother let loose with brownie mix and a Betty Crocker oven.

ALVIN LUCIER
STILL LIVES
LOVELY MUSIC LS012 CD

BY JULIAN COWLEY

Lucid, practical demonstrations of well-defined acoustic phenomena, Alvin Lucier's experimental music has often given off the antiseptic whiff of the scientist at work His investigations largely steered clear of conventional instrumentation: for *Music For Solo Performer* (1965), he attached electrodes to his scalp and generated percussive music directed by brainwaves, for *I Am Sitting In A Room* (1969), he recycled taped speech through a room until it had filtered out all but the resonant frequencies, *Quasimodo The Great Lover* (1970) was about the transmission of sound across large distances by means of microphone-amplifier-loudspeaker systems.

During the 1980s, however, Lucier received requests for pieces from performing musicians, encouraging the highly effective application of his exploratory approach to compositions incorporating musical instruments These can be heard on the earlier Lovely Music albums, *Crossings* (1990), *Panorama* (1997) and *Theme* (1999) *Still Lives* continues the sequence As ever, the music is directly affecting in its physical impact on the ear, even as it impresses with its straightforward, conceptual clarity.

Music For Piano With Slow Sweep Pure Wave Oscillators (1992) was written for Japanese pianist Aki Takahashi, but here it's Marilyn Nonken, who places single tones meticulously over the two sweeping waves, intervening in the formation of a beating pattern At once simple and subtle, the piece is an elegantly geometric exposition of the vibrational character of sound. That description might locate it squarely in the laboratory, but fellow composer Pauline Oliveros was right to call Lucier "the poet of electronic music" Science and art are comfortably integrated within his unified vision

The title of *Still Lives* (1995), a longer piece for piano, nods to the gallery It's a suite of eight short movements, commissioned and performed by Joseph Kubera Lucier mapped out shapes, which were then translated into computer-generated waves The piano plays notated pitches against them and the result once more is audible beating Honed playing Feldman, Kubera's touch is perfectly suited to render this floating world of waves and particles

In between the piano pieces lies *On The Carpet Of Leaves Illuminated By The Moon*, featuring Ryuko Mizutani on koto Single tones, slowly lowered in pitch by gradual degrees, are plucked against a solitary pure wave Aptly, the title of this work is taken from Italo Calvino's *If On A Winter's Night A Traveller....* Calvino was a superb metafictionist, holding steady focus on the fiction-making process itself while weaving a unique series of magical tales. Lucier does the same for sound, a metamusician disclosing the basics of its production while consistently designing strange and spellbinding music unlike any other

RAPHE MALIK QUARTET
COMPANIONS
EREMITE MTE034 CD

WILLIAM PARKER & THE LITTLE HUEY CREATIVE MUSIC ORCHESTRA
RAINCOAT IN THE RIVER
EREMITE MTE036 CD

BY DAN WARBURTON

Recorded in May 1998, *Companions* is trumpeter Raphe Malik's last known recording with tenorist Glen Spearman, who died in October that year. The line-up is completed by William Parker on bass and Paul Murphy on drums. "Lyon's Jump" references ex-Cecil Taylor altoist Jimmy Lyons (in whose memory this concert took place at the Vision Festival), who invited Paul Murphy to join his group after hearing the drummer play in 1974. It's inspired stuff, with Parker turning in a bowed solo of snarling ferocity The tempo, if not the intensity, drops for "Emblematic". Spearman and Malik are accompanied to perfection by Murphy's soft sticks An unsung drummer who also studied with Gene Krupa and Louie Bellson, Murphy is outstanding throughout. "Health Food" starts out like a hurricane, but Murphy moves the storm through before it causes major structural damage Spearman, for once, appears a little hesitant, but blows himself out of his rut with some paint-stripping high register screaming, to the crowd's delight. "Bend" is the calm after the storm, the horns hanging lazily off the theme while Murphy and Parker swing hard

Parker's 17 piece Little Huey Creative Music Orchestra recorded *Raincoat In The River* (the first of three projected volumes) live at Boston's ICA. Compared to their earlier, boisterous but somewhat ragged *Mayor Of Punkville* (AUM Fidelity 20DD), it's a more poignant, introspective affair, based loosely on the life (and supposed death) of New York street musician 'Uncle' Marvin Nuñez The line-up adds singer Leena Conquest and cellist Shiau-Shu Yu, who helps relieve Parker of bass duty, allowing him to solo on other instruments. After an elegiac opening duet between Yu's cello and Parker's shakuhachi, "Mountain/Maintain" superimposes wailing trombones, the polyrhythmic intricacies of two drummers, Parker's marimba and a grizzly baritone solo from Dave Sewelson in a vertical form worthy of George Russell "Anast Crossing The Lake Of Light" builds steadily over a relentless 11 beat tuba ostinato, Conquest's plaintive wordless incantations and Yu's cello decorated by occasional sonic scribbles from Parker's bombard (sounding like a sopranino sax).

"Raincoat In The River" appears in a slightly different form as the title track of Parker's new Thirsty Ear release *Raining On The Moon*. The track at last finds him on bass, and features ebullient solos from Rob Brown and Alex Lodico. The closing "Painters Celebration" is dedicated to Marion Brown, but Gil Evans's Monday Night Orchestra comes to mind on several occasions. Although Parker's horn arrangements are a little less subtly voiced, it has that same raw energy and willingness to take risks

STEPHAN MATHIEU
GIGUE, LIVE @ A-MUSIK
FÄLLT F00180001 CD

WARMDESK
THE PRIDE OF THE SOUTH SIDE, LIVE @ WHKP
FÄLLT F00180002 CD

BY PHILIP SHERBURNE

Fällt has never been a typical record label Their output tends toward special projects in odd formats, ranging from downloadable MP3s and PDF files to 35mm slides to 2DDD's 24 CD *Invalid Object Series* Even on purely audio releases, their design-centric approach is suggestive of a desire to reinvest mass produced reproductions with the aura of the unique object The label's new live series, appropriately enough,

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villa claustrophobia cd/lp
A layering of sound and structure that combines songwriting sensibility and improvisational abstractions headed by Richmond, Virginia's Jesse Poe. With guest appearances by Mick Turner Jessica Billey, David Lowery, Ned Oldham and Nirmal Bajekal.

substractif:



tim hecker :
my love is rotten to the core cd
Following his debut release for Substractif, *Haunt Me*, Tim Hecker continues to explore the boundaries of structured ambient music. Incredibly catchy, yet challenging electronica that boasts a great sense of humor



polmo polpo :
the science of breath cd
Multi-instrumentalist and producer Sandro Perri blends deep, murky techno with rich layers of feedback and densely orchestrated melodies. Heavily layered cello and lap steel guitar combine to create a world of shadowy songs drenched in echo and immersed in the throbbing pulse of "dance music".

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substractif Fancy
alien8 recordings

is more than merely documentary. It reflects the changing nature of performance itself.

On recent recordings for Ritornell and Orthlorng Musork, Stephan Mathieu's gentle fugues of sense and forgetting demonstrate the Saarbrücken musician's ability to reconfigure familiar sound sources into uncanny forms. In his live performances, he often reworks his own material into densely harmonic assemblages that further mask their source material behind a deep, swooning buzz. On "Gigue", the first of two tracks recorded live at Cologne's *A-Musik* in July 2000, scraps of Ouran Ouran's "Onve By" form the cellular matter for a 25 minute exploration of thrum and scrape. It's tempting to write off the source as kitsch. Surely Mathieu could have harvested these clicks and whirrs from anywhere. Yet a quotation from the Ouran song provides the epigraph for the CD. *"It was the hottest day in July/And all along Santa Monica Boulevard/Cars were stood still."* The text's parallels to Mathieu's music are striking: the dissolution of perspective, the flat light glinting off metal, the dull, dead air. Either Mathieu chose the direction of his remix based on those lyrics, or he heard a hint of a smoggy vista lurking behind Ouran Ouran's pop sheen. Regardless, the piece is a remarkable example of Mathieu's live strategy, folding wisps of sound back into the fabric, over and over, until you find yourself wrapped in a blanket of white noise. "Variation", recorded the next morning for a supine audience, follows a similar strategy, reworking one of his own "Wurmloch Variations" Instead of the previous night's crescendo toward chaos, he produces the dizzying glow of a thousand crystal rims being rubbed at once. The recording captures only the last five minutes of a 90 minute performance, but it's just long enough to find your way to the infinity within.

Where Mathieu folds sound around the listener, Warmdesk – Chicagoan Bill Selman – peals drones off percussion in a way that simultaneously embraces and repels. Two 15 minute tracks grow out of a slow tumble of tones. As they unfurl, rhythmic pitfalls undercut the tracks' smooth surfaces, leaving you pulled this way and that, buffetted and roped close, pinched and stroked into sweet submission.

MERZBOW
A TASTE OF MERZBOW
MEGO 040 CD

MERZBOW/KOUHEI MATSUNAGA
SPLIT
TIGERBEAT6 MEOW041 CD

BORIS W/MERZBOW
MEGATONE
INTOXIA IXCD0004 CD

BY JIM HAYNES

While the immediate impact of Merzbow will always be the sheer power of his noise constructions, Masami Akita's increasing use of rhythm as an evolving subtext to the noise displays considerable dexterity. On his Mego release, *A Taste Of Merzbow*, the recurring chug of mechanical rhythms amid jagged chops of thick distortion secures a formalist connection between his host label's post-Techno deconstructions and Merzbow's legendary noise-junk. This album is almost a case study in how Merzbow controls rhythmic noise. Shaping loops out of molten sound, he doubles them up with counter rhythms and detonates the whole in a sonic fireball. With a nod to his Mego hosts, he dnzzles generative electronic squiggles through his seering white noise filters. But, though its track titles and artwork are culled from cookbooks, how *A Taste Of Merzbow* relates to Japanese cuisine is beyond me.

On the split CD with Kouhei Matsunaga released on Tigerbeat6, Merzbow offers more of his nightmarish rhythmic plods. Here, he syncopates a series of appropriated loops crushed into piercing squalls of noise. The first track, however, is based on Olivier Messiaen's *Mode De Valeurs Et D'Intensité Pour Piano*, albeit digitally Acid stained into a barely recognisable two note modulation smouldering beneath a characteristic Merzbow assault of searing noise. The culture jamming continues in the paranoiac throb of deconstructed drum fills, one of which may have been lifted from 80s hair Metallers Nazareth, if the title "Earth Nazareth" means anything. Kouhei's contributions venture into Alec Empire's OHR territory of stalking breakbeats shrouded in thick applications of distortion.

Considering it's the stage for a monumental clash between two units notorious for their use of volume and ferocity, even as they come from different arenas, *Megatone* perversely represents the more tranquil sides of Merzbow and the heavy Japanese trio Bons. The album opens with a 24 minute drone constructed very simply out of a low feedback tone and a digitally enhanced, crackling hiss. The restraint displayed by both parties makes for uneasy listening, as the threat of a sonic explosion is always pending, but never actualised. When caustic ejaculations of noise eventually emerge, they're hardly ear-shattering jolts. Rather, Bons and Merzbow slowly introduce shards of noise alongside a spectral guitar bathed in a cosmic echo. Bons get to flex their downtuned, guitar god muscles towards the end of the album, complementing Merzbow's quieter presentations of Powerbook noise with subterreanean gasps of Earth-like feedback.

JOE MORRIS
THE AGE OF EVERYTHING
RITI 004 CD

STEVE LANTNER TRIO
SAYING SO
RITI 005 CD

BY JOHN CRATCHLEY

For the last 20 years Joe Morris has been variously portrayed as a revolutionary, the man who holds the future of the guitar, or the Ornette Coleman of his instrument. The expectations such hyperbole engenders are a heavy burden to bear for a musician like Morris, where the pressure to hone the cutting edge threatens to stall genuine explorations. It might not revolutionise the guitar or foment an uprising, but *The Age Of Everything* could well be a masterpiece. Like all great innovators, Morris has a firm grasp of the history and tradition of his field of endeavour, even as he seeks to subvert and enhance it.

Produced for his own Riti Records, *The Age Of Everything* is a set of wonderfully inventive trio improvisations in the head-solo-head tradition. Accompanied by Timo Shanko on bass and Luther Gray on drums, Morris's trio go about constructing music of relaxed tension and lazy energy. Morris's overtly singular guitar doesn't sound like anyone else, although there are elements of James 'Blood' Ulmer and Bern Nix in his phrasing and attack. What marks Morris out is the way he links bebop-like lines to lateral thinking and a non-linear approach to improvisation. The fluidity of his phrasing is more rooted in piano improvisation than the guitar. Like Bill Evans's piano flights, Morris's solos arrive fully formed. His guitar tone is unadorned by additional programming. Staying close to the strings, his every fingered note completes the circuit of thought process, articulation and dissemination. The ideas tumble out of this circuit's organic flow of notes with such eagerness that a logjam looks inevitable. But the splutter aways somehow resolves itself into an unbroken, effervescent procession, helped in no small part here by the warmth of the recording.

If Morris were a pianist he would be Steve Lantner. But as that seat's occupied, Morris plays bass on Lantner's *Saying So*. Completing the line-up on drums is Laurence Cook. Lantner's approach to improvisation is strikingly similar to Morris's, meaning their bass and piano interplay is tightly interwoven, with Cook providing counterpoint. As on Morris's album, Lantner's sensitive intensity admits no bluster. His intricate integrations of harmony and dissonance are underscored and enhanced by Cook, who rides the cymbals high during Lantner's melodic ramblings, and gets more percussive during the trio's more asymmetric forays. Morris tackles bass much in the same way he tackles guitar. Being no timekeeper – he leaves that role to Cook – he produces a continuous pulse that shifts its shape in perfect co-ordination with Lantner.

LO KA PING
LOST SOUNDS OF THE TAO: CHINESE MASTERS OF THE GUQIN
WORLD ARBITER 2004 CD

BY RICHARD HENDERSON

If it were not for Lo Ka Ping, a Taoist scholar who lived in the hills above Hong Hong until his death in 1980, aged 84, an ancient Chinese classical tradition might well have disappeared in Mao's 1960s Cultural Revolution. Lo Ka Ping was perhaps the greatest exponent of the guqin, a zither strung with seven silk cords, descended from the Indian vina, with a history steeped in the mysticism of Taoism. Remarkably, his skills were developed in isolation, with one exception he confined his music making to his home.

Lo Ka Ping's touch was deft, not a little bluesy and enormously subtle. His melodies evolved slowly, as though whorls of incense smoke had been preserved by musical notation, punctuated with slapped chords, the sound of a house of cards collapsing. Four recordings of Lo's performances, crisp, sonorous and garlanded with birdsong, survived on a reel sent to Theresa Sterne, the late Nonesuch Explorer A&R executive. Others surfaced later on cassettes of varying quality. Though the latter are a noisier, more challenging listen, the floating world conjured by Lo Ka Ping's broad melismas remains undimmed.

Among the ten selections that comprise Lo's legacy are two recordings from his only concert appearance in 1971. There is no way to tell from his confident live performance that, according to recordist Dr Dale Craig, "[Lo Ka Ping] was a master who was achieving perfection in almost total isolation". It is difficult to imagine the impression that the tidal wave of applause heard here made upon this slight, enigmatic figure, seeing how it was his sole ovation.

KRISTOFF K ROLL
LE PETIT BRUIT D'À CÔTÉ DU CŒUR DU MONDE (VARIATIONS 5 & 7)
VAND'ŒUVRE 0222 2XCD

BY DAN WARBURTON

Complete with a 96 page booklet of photographs, diagrams and texts in several languages, this is a "poetic homage to a piece [sic] of Africa" based on field recordings made by Carole Rieussec and Jean-Christophe Camps (aka Kristoff K Roll) during a trip to West Africa in 1994. Their work is closer in spirit to the roving microphony of Luc Ferrari than it is to France's stuffy musique concrète establishment (whose complacency Camps has eloquently criticised in print on several occasions). But it also recalls Jean Dubuffet's scandalously neglected experiments with tape recorders in the 1960s. An understanding of spoken French is probably necessary to fully appreciate the African recordings, especially references to the sans papiers (African immigrants to France subjected to particularly degrading treatment at the hands of the French authorities). The first version of the work was performed in concert at Vandoeuvre back in 1995, *Variation 5* dates from February 1999, *Variation 7* from January 2000 – all the performances were taped and extracts are used here along with studio recordings.

Variation 5 mixes musique concrète with instrumental pieces composed by Rieussec (performed by cello virtuoso Christophe Roy and violinists Noemi Schindler and Sona Khachatia) and improvisations on baritone saxophone from Daunik Lazro. The aim is more montage than collage, and the string pieces, predominantly Feldman-style with smatterings of Xenakis, are relatively successful in context, but nowhere near as accomplished as the tape work on tracks such as "Sur La Route", with its inspired dub-like treatment of traditional African instruments. But Lazro's impressive circular breathing work on the baritone gives the train sounds a thrilling ride.

The fuller textures of *Variation 7*, whose spatial aspect in performance is unfortunately lost here, feature Lazro throughout, it's certainly not a concerto in the accepted sense of the word, but he is the central protagonist here, reacting to the surrounding sounds with the same awe as the listener. Apart from the improvised element, nothing is left to chance. This is accomplished and mature work, a document that raises more questions than it answers, inviting us to reflect on France's ethnic diversity, ironically at a time when it was being called into question in the political arena. Incorporating the sound of street protests in Paris in 1996 against the Chirac government's treatment of the sans papiers, the work resonates profoundly in 2002 as testimony to the rich melting pot of French culture currently under threat.

JOHN RUSSELL
FROM NEXT TO LAST
EMANEM 4071 CD

BY BRIAN MARLEY

Guitarist John Russell was caught up early in Derek Bailey's wake – not as a slavish imitator, but as a musician aware of the older guitarist's

On 9/11, New York artist William Basinski was busy preserving a clutch of disintegrating tape loops, but the project inevitably became an emotional personal memorial to Manhattan's dead. By David Keenan



Paradise lost. William Basinski as the dead Chatterton

WILLIAM BASINSKI
THE DISINTEGRATION LOOPS
2062 NO NUMBER CD

While transferring and archiving a batch of old analogue tape loops he had first worked over in 1982, New York based musician and composer William Basinski stumbled across a forgotten suite of bucolic compositions. Back then, he recalls, he had decided against incorporating them into his then ongoing *Shortwave Music* series – a collection of tape loops of varying lengths mutated via pitch control and mixed together with orchestral snatches of shortwave static – on the grounds that they already felt fully formed, "too beautiful and too pure" to be subsumed by electromagnetic signal. On rediscovering them, Basinski was instantly transported across the decades, as spectral brass bands and elegiac strings spun in dizzyingly slow circles, the musical remnants of his youth speaking of huge American spaces as eloquently as the settings of Charles Ives or Aaron Copland. He immediately began the transfer process to back them up digitally, but as the tapes started to roll something went wrong. Due to their age and the general unreliability of magnetic tape, the loops began to disintegrate. Little particles of iron oxide fell from the tape like snow, leaving a series of staggered silences and misshapen swells on the new recording. "It was very emotional for me, and mystical as well," Basinski writes in the sleevenotes. "Tied up in these memories were my youth, my paradise lost, the American pastoral landscape, all dying gently, gracefully, beautifully."

In effect, Basinski was witnessing the last gasps of his own music, the sound of fading memories. As the tape wore on, the music grew less familiar, a distanced echo of itself, with everything but the most perilous of outlines obliterated, a few stray chords clinging to life. When it was over, all his work had literally turned to dust. Yet its essence had been preserved in the transfer to a digital file documenting its life and slow fade into death. That he had set this process in motion running up to and during 11 September last year makes the resulting music particularly poignant and harrowing listening.

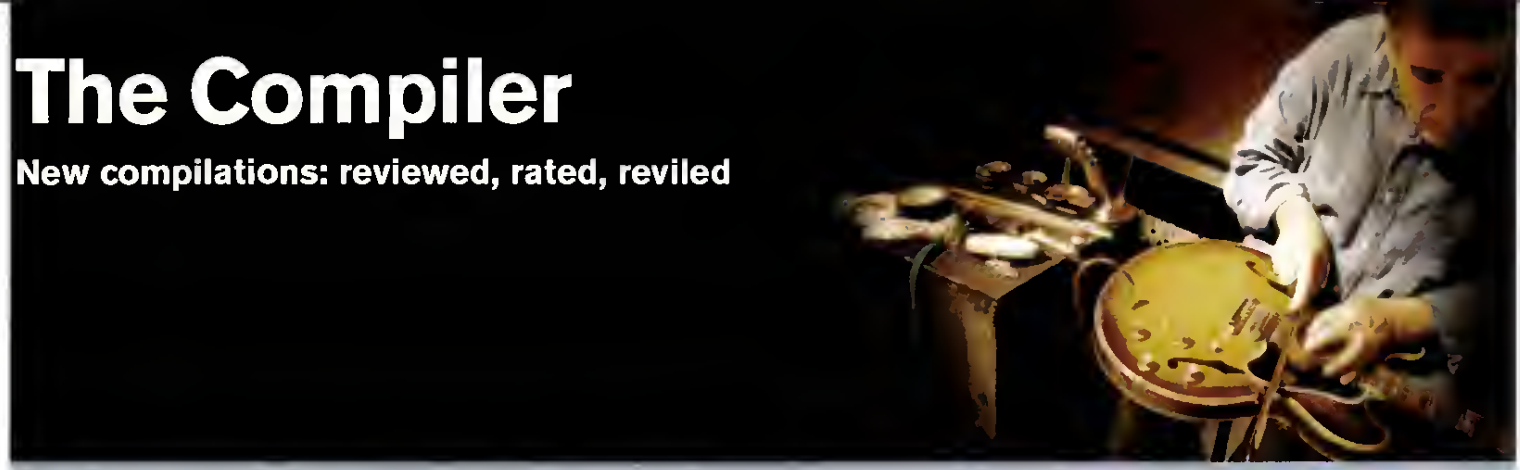
On the surface, *The Disintegration Loops* is as minimalist as much of Basinski's work, but what especially distinguishes it is his overriding obsession with the operation of memory. However, his music has not yet had much chance to lodge itself in the collective memory. His own 2062 label released *Water Music* (2001), a 60 minute piece for the Voyetra synthesizer that has the clarity of a dream, where distant, bubbling tones tumble over the horizon to create a field of gravity that inevitably tugs the listener into the past. Citing John Coltrane and "runaway freight trains" as his formal models, Basinski also plays saxophone and clarinet. When he is not looking to annihilate time with his solo sax and tape work, he can be heard embellishing the orchestral torch songs of NYC's Antony & The Johnsons. Additionally, in the 1990s, he played in the electronica group Life On Mars. And, concurrent with music, Basinski has been involved in underground film production and downtown fashion – he used to run a boutique in Williamsburg called Lady Bird that sold vintage and designer furniture and clothes, partially as a performance art experiment to beautify America. Before *Water Music*, his only other available CD was a 1998 selection of *Shortwave Pieces* on the Raster-Noton label. But right now he's rectifying that state of affairs by digitally archiving unexposed early 80s works like *The River* (the culmination of his *Shortwave Music* experiments), and *Variations: A Movement In Chrome Primitive* (early studies in piano and tape), in preparation for their imminent release.

Of course, to some listeners 11 September will seem an arbitrary hook for this music. But for Basinski, who witnessed the World Trade Centre disaster unfolding before his eyes as he was monitoring the digital transfer of *The Disintegration Loops*, the link is just too uncanny. He watched as the towers fell, changing Manhattan's skyline so drastically that immediately afterwards it was already impossible to remember how it used to look. This overwhelming sense of loss is conveyed in the CD's cover art, which features a photograph of New York burning, taken that evening from the roof of his apartment. For Basinski, it was as if he had been unwittingly commissioned to soundtrack the end of the world. Such an unenviable task might well play to his more romantic sensibilities, which are made clear in the back cover recreation of Henry Wallis's 1856 painting, *The Death Of [Thomas] Chatterton*, starring Basinski himself as the 18th century English poet who poisoned himself in 1770, aged 17. It's a risky gamble but, on balance, it serves to make the music's contexts even more complex. Essentially, it highlights the late 18th and early 19th century Romantic idea of death as a surrender to oblivion. Just as the Wallis portrait embodies how the artist's work acquires significance in the light of his passing, so Basinski's base materials become all the more affecting in the CD's digitised freezeframing of their ineluctable decay and eventual extinction.

In parallel with the harrowing footage of collapsing new buildings, *The Disintegration Loops*' final moments become an aural equivalent to Ground Zero, with the music slowly shedding its frills, concrete details dissolving in the decay that comes to define its uniqueness. Its process of (de)composition mirrors one way people work through their memories of disaster. Basinski describes both processes as simply "letting go of the unimportant sustains". But the music speaks for itself and in much more poignant terms than any act of 'auto-destructive' art for art's sake. Subjected to the uncontrollable chance factor of tape decay, *The Disintegration Loops* is sound as matter being *seized* by time, the remorseless logic of its destruction counterpointing the staggered decay of memory. Yet as the loops slowly tumble into the void, turning foggier and more indistinct, they lower the last scree veiling the music's moment of extinction, upon which vague memories of people and times long forgotten are projected, little shadows dancing on in eternity. □

The Compiler

New compilations: reviewed, rated, reviled



Why strum when you can bow?: Fred Frith

The renewed enthusiasm for folk music, steadily simmering over the past few years, has now reached boiling point with a new generation of players becoming creatively embroiled in the musical legacy that was laid down in the 60s by John Fahey, Robbie Basho and Sandy Bull. Guitarist Henry Kaiser has now put together ***156 Strings: Nineteen Totally Original Acoustic Guitarists*** (Cuneiform RUNE163 CD), an idea which originally took root after hearing a tape he received from fellow guitarist Steffen Basho-Junghans, called *The Virgin Orchestra Series*. Kaiser's compilation also takes its inspiration from Fahey's Takoma label and Fred Frith's *Guitar Solos* series. Featuring performances from such silver-stringed squeakers as former Takoma artists Peter Lang and Michael Gulezian (whose excerpt from his "Plook The Asbestos Lobster" has a Fahey-style sense of surreal fun running through it), experimentalists like Nels Cline and Frith, plus a spirited home run from Kaiser himself with his "Getting To Fifth Base", *156 Strings* respectfully retunes Fahey and Basho's original acoustic vision and lets it ring out loud and anew. Elsewhere, part one of Steffen Basho-Junghans's "Virgin Orchestra No 1" is a magnificently atmospheric piece where he shapes the sound of his 12 string guitar to mimic the tolling of a funereal bell, or the erratic chiming of an ancient grandfather clock whose works have been unbalanced by rodent infestation. Here's hoping that one day Basho-Junghans will unleash the rest of this remarkable work. Former Fairport Convention guitarist Richard Thompson also makes a welcome showing with "How Does Your Garden Grow?", a beautifully constructed solo acoustic miniature that harks back to the glory days of the late 60s UK folk rock scene. (EP)

Thompson naturally reappears as one of the multitude of folkies that make up Topic's exhaustive four CD retrospective, ***The Acoustic Folk Box*** (Topic TSF4DD1 4XCD) which "sets out to trace the rich tradition of folk-rooted music from the British Isles over four decades – from 1960-2000". Almost inevitably, this massive undertaking eventually becomes hopelessly bogged down by the sheer weight of its subject matter. That said, there are some fine performances here, particularly from such songbirds as Anne Briggs, Shirley Collins, Sandy Denny and June Tabor, legendary figures like Ewan MacColl, Nic Jones, Peter Bellamy and Davy Graham, as well as key groups such as The Watersons, The Incredible String Band, The Young Tradition (folk rock's first punks?), Brass Monkey and folk supergroup Pentangle, the only folk act who can be said to possess a genuine 'acid folk' vibe. Despite this impressive line-up, the surface barely gets scratched and, like one of its early predecessors (Transatlantic/Island's equally ambitious 1975 release, *The Electric Muse* box), the listener is only given a fleeting, teasing echo of a single artist's work within the field. For an instant history lesson on how folk rock evolved, *The Acoustic Folk Box* is probably all anyone requires, but won't take the place of deeper excavations into the field's sprawling back catalogue. (EP)

The latest compilation from Miami's estimable Chocolate Industries label, ***Urban Renewal Program*** (Chocolate Industries/Ninja Tune ZEN72 CD), plainly has loftier ideals than most of its artists can be bothered to fulfil. "A platform for the exploration and interpretation of urban life through music and art," reads the mission statement. But when El-P shuffles up to the mic to pitch a spoken word interlude, he's oddly selfconscious: *"Yeah, urban renewal,"* he mumbles. *"Let's just clean this little environment up real quick before we all burn in a nuclear blast of fucking death and pain."* Fortunately, his musical contribution, the muzzy "Deadlight" implicitly articulates the theme to far greater effect. If, previously, Chocolate Industries have been predominantly known for releasing electronica with an unusually deep understanding of HipHop, this time the poles are reversed. HipHop's an easy way of suggesting uptight, claustrophobic cityscapes, of course. But it's hard to complain when the Def Jux all stars (minus, surprisingly, Cannibal Ox), Mos Def and Diverse are drafted to the cause. Scott Herren, in his Prefuse 73 guise, provides the jittery musical link between the rappers and the instrumentalists, most of whom work hard to suggest constant motion, conceptual bustle. Tortoise's bright, fluid playing on "CTA" is a rare respite from the studied noir atmospherics. Nevertheless, *Urban Renewal Program* overcomes the oppressive burden of its Big Idea through brave compiling technique, decent taste and quality control. (JM)

Since anyone can now download a free copy of Acid or ProTools, the cut 'n' paste aesthetic has spread like wildfire. While the Marxist in me loves to see people seizing the means of production, the critic can't help but want it to remain the preserve of the professional. London's DJ Yoda has been producing mixtapes for a while now, and the first instalment in his *How To Cut & Paste* series is a certifiable classic. But ***How To Cut & Paste Mix Tape Vol 2*** (Antidote ANT1D1 CD) shows why professionalism only goes so far. The format itself is the main problem, rather than Yoda's skills or taste. *How To Cut & Paste* is an uncomfortable combination of a Funkmaster Flex celeb fest, turntablist showcase and Steinski lunacy, and none of the elements blend very well. The Beatnuts' "We Got The Funk" runs unimpeded straight after a fairly lame Billie Holiday routine and right before a reggae mash-up, with everything being too compartmentalised. Where's the bleed, the vertiginous swoops of logic, the birdies circling around the DJ's head? While schizophrenia is often a boon to the mixologist, Yoda has too much of a handle on it to be much fun for the listener. (PSha)

Field And Stream is the title of America's finest mag for the outdoor sportsman, and ***Fields And Streams*** (Kill Rock Stars KRS341 2XCD) finds Olympia, Washington's venerable Kill Rock Stars label hunting high and low in the global indie forest, trying to bag some trophies. Spread across two CDs, the label's bizarre, hit and miss aesthetic – bubblegum punk, earnest singer-songwriting, no-fun deconstructionist rock, cutesy pure pop, free improvisation, all refreshingly filled with female participation – was bound to find a few things to bring to the taxidermist's. Future wall-mountings include The Bangs, Yeah Yeah Yeahs (right now they deserve the hype), Red Monkey, Dada Swing, Erase Errata and Deerhoof. Sonic Youth completists (and only completists) may be interested in "Male-In-Communication" by The Supreme Indifference (Kim Gordon, Jim O'Rourke and Alan Licht). (PSha)

Mobilé Records is a new imprint set up by Heiko Hoffman, editor of Germany's Groove magazine. Its concept-driven first release ***Asthmatic Worm*** (Mobilé MDB1 CD) makes no bones about its MD, underlined in its hopeful subtitle, "A Compilation Of Twelve Electronic Accordion & Melodica Tracks". Polkaphobics take heart: the album's range runs from digidub to downtempo tango, and whatever bad memories you harbour of the wheezing beast, they're unlikely to be revisited here. Some of the more surprising tracks, in fact, are those that take the accordion more or less at face value. Doctor Rockit's sublime "Café De Flore" conjures a kind of Continental flair, while the sepia tones of Gonzales's brief and touching "Melodika" runs counter to electronica's futurist fetishism. But a song like Maerz's "Bars 1,2,3,4" – knit from chimes, Rhodes, drum machine and analogue synthesizers – folds the wind instrument back into the mix so that it's just another shiny thread in the pattern. Suggesting a lullaby version of some Minutemen song, Sensorama's "Where The Rabbit Sleeps" takes the melodica at face value. It exploits its expressive tone but steers clear of its connotations. Somewhere in the middle are tracks like Markus Nikolai's "Would Grandpa Like It?", which runs the accordion through a sleep chamber of delay, or Burnt Friedman and Jaki Liebezeit's "Rastafahndung". On the latter track, a rolling dub nodder, they make inevitable references to Augustus Pablo's legendary grasp of the melodica, but the song is inevitably charged with the Germans' clicks and quirks. (PShe)

Omertà, Dnuri E Sangu: La Musica Della Mafia Vol II (PIAS PIASGDD1 CD) follows the same path as PIAS's first, and rather remarkable, compilation of Calabrian Mafia music, *Il Canto Di Malavita*. Perhaps even more than any number of wiseguy flicks or *Sopranos* episodes, the music collected here starkly depicts the singular combination of epic bloodthirstiness and garish sentimentality that makes the Mafia demimonde so fascinating. Against spare but chirpy guitar phrases that Marty Robbins would have been entirely comfortable singing over, these rough and tumble troubadours sing tales of loyalty and honour that could easily fit in an episode of *Star Trek: The Next Generation* were it not for the 19th century settings, oh and lines like, *"Whoever sends me to jail cannot hope for mercy/ Screaming 'Help, help' won't do you any good/ Since a cadaver can never be forgiven/Make a sign of the devil/You will die, cadaver, you will be dishonoured"*. The tarantellas liberally sprinkled throughout only add to the distinctly queasy atmosphere. (PSha)

Cuisine Non-Stop (Luaka Bop 173D1 CD) is David Byrne's latest attempt at curating a World Music zeitgeist, this time with the new generation of French 'neo-realist' singer-songwriters. So far, so unpromising, an impression only reinforced by the immediate appearance of an accordion at the disc's very start, Lo'Jo's "Baji Larabat". However, it quickly becomes apparent that Lo'Jo is not some existentially challenged cabaret outcast in a pea coat smoking a cigarette meaningfully under a street lamp in the rain. The accordion is soon joined by a motorvational double bassline and a scything kora lick, locating this firmly in modern, multicultural France, not Le Pen's Gaullist fantasy. Java's "Au Banquet Au Chausseurs" is similarly unique: a neat, downtempo jazzy number with a chorus that goes something like, *"English beef/ Legalise/Poulet Belge/Legalise/Salmonelle/ Legalise"* – unless I'm missing something, those are some of the best nicknames for pot I've heard in a long time. There's still something very Jools Holland about it all, but at least it's more Brigitte Fontaine than Edith Piaf. (PSha) ☐ *Reviewed by John Mulvey, Edwin Pouncey, Peter Shapiro and Philip Sherburne*

PHOTO: EVA VERMANDEL

example and the avenues it opened. Russell became a stalwart of the London Musicians' Collective in its formative years; he has kept impressive company since, playing with testing musicians such as saxophonists Evan Parker and John Butcher, pianist Chris Burn and percussionist Roger Turner. In group improvising he has often appeared a constructive but unassuming figure, however, and solo appearances on record have been rare.

In 1978 Russell occupied one side of the Incus album *Home Cooking*, the other being taken by Richard Coldman, a markedly different kind of guitarist. *From Next To Last* goes a long way towards remedying the neglect: six solos using three weathered acoustic guitars, designed for jazz playing, with f-holes and metal strings. Ringing harmonics, dry chords and dampened notes recall Bailey directly, but Russell's own musical character is confirmed throughout. The decisiveness of his plectrum attack is striking, it has a singular quiet aggression and it's certainly strong in rhythmic confidence. Customarily incidental sounds of fingers lifting from the fretboard or sliding on it here become elements of a distinctive style. Russell respects what the instrument can do and takes evident pleasure in it. John Russell has spent more than 25 years working in the shadows. Catch him while he's in the open.

DJ SHADOW
THE PRIVATE PRESS
ISLAND 8118586982 CD/LP

BY DAVE TOMPKINS

DJ Shadow's long-awaited *The Private Press* begins with a "(Letter From Home)", an eerie, almost heartbreaking message in vinyl from a woman on the road who misses her husband? Brother? Lover? Now imagine that 7" 'letter' recorded during some digging trip in the future, reporting the discovery of DJ Shadow's "Monosylabik", a Raymond *Exercises In Style* Queneau-like in-joke that works only once the premise is understood. Two bars walk into a guy with a machine and get bent until they're fresh out of shape, left vocodering in a clogged drain and talking shit in as many ways as times it took me to catch it. If this is what Shadow made of all those obscure vinyl scribbles, imagine what that crate digger two generations from now will do with Shadow's own sampler séance. In fact, this is the fun to be had now: remaking, reimagining *The Private Press* on your own terms and escaping the namedrop headlock of a producer's crates. This is the implied message of *The Private Press*: it's y'all's rather than just somebody else's records. As the suave French guy says on "Un Autre Introduction", *"Attention: c'est à vous pour la danse."*

The second track, "Fixed Income", sets the tone for the rest of the album: an owl becomes a guitar and a flatfooted bassline plods through Dodge City strums, more story than samples. This is what all the fanatics who remain in Shadow's shadow despite studying every detail down to the width of his shoelaces fail to understand: it ain't what you got, but what you do with it. "Walkie Talkie" is the 'OJ cut', driven by a sun-drowning foghorn that could wake Ray Harryhausen's beast from its 20,000 fathoms. "Six Days" is a 'talkie' that originally ran as 60s psych – its Colonel Bagshot voice worrying the skies. Worry not: in the spirit of a personal press (and special edition), *"Tuesdays is you's days"*.

The title of "Giving Up The Ghost" may be Shadow's message to his adepts, but the momentum of the needlepoint kalimba, tambourine and spooky zither will carry you into the nearest vinyl emporium looking for some Ocora field recordings. Then, of course, there's the two song motorway mini-suite (a comment on all the traffic in the beat-digging scene?) in which you play human Frogger to rapper Lateef's rapping leadfoot on "Mashin' On The Motorway", as a speedometer bass acts out sci-fi writer Harlan Ellison's duelling drivers from *Along The Scenic Route*. The inevitable view to a roadkill is through the windshield, and into the crescendo of a lost hubcap wobbling on its back like a metal dog dish. Then a hellhowl tears the sky as if someone ripped a bumper sticker (reading "Play hard, Earn Heart") off Lee Michaels's hairy chest. "Blood On The Motorway" is the longest track – or trudge, since the singing recalls Euro-nightmare Haddaway, until the piano and strings make your throat lump it and the first team drums spirit you out above their shoulders, bewildered and yelling, *"I ain't dead yet!"*. It's not easy but it is cathartic.

It's kind of like a cracked-out Robert Downey Jr doing the 80s hincty dance to "You Can't Go Home Again". But what new wave has whoop-ass drums and trembling Argentinian gospel guitar? It's all very far away from his early Reconstruction blend of "All Of My Love" and "Love Rap", or *Endtroducing* for that matter, but you knew he couldn't go back there anyway.

But all of Shadow's shadows still wish he did. You say get a life and they run out to get the Lifer's Group 12", the first one with Shadow's "Lesson 4" on the flip. Then they go after every record he used on "Lesson 4", followed by every record sampling those records, followed by, no, chased by, everybody else who wants every break, every record set meant to be broken. Records are running out, circles are concentrically closing in until a-ha! A *Private Press*, a seven inch postcard cut into the B-side of the limited promo 12" of DJ Shadow's "Monosylabik", a message from a loved one, innocent country miles away from the World Cup fanaticism of record collecting.

ARCHIE SHEPP
POEM FOR MALCOLM
BYG ACTUEL VOLUME 11/GET BACK GET311 LP

LIVE AT ANTIBES (VOL 1)
BYG ACTUEL VOLUME 38/GET BACK GET338 LP

LIVE AT ANTIBES (VOL 2)
BYG ACTUEL VOLUME 39/GET BACK GET339 LP

LIVE AT THE PANAFRICAN FESTIVAL
BYG ACTUEL VOLUME 51/GET BACK GET351 LP

BY BEN WATSON

In 1969-70, reverberating with the world-historic events of May 1968, young Parisians wanted radical music, and Archie Shepp was their man. Jean Georgakarakos (who later moved to New York, shortened his name to Karakos and founded the Celluloid label) issued these records in 1970 and 1971 on his BYG label. In common with New York's ESP, he saw the black free jazz players as larger than life, tribunes of the oppressed, titans of revolution. His Actuel series has a manifesto-like quality, shiny white gatefold sleeves, a colour portrait photograph filling the back cover like a film poster, ecstatic sleevenotes by firebrands Philippe Carles, Delfeil De Ton and Pat Griffith.

Poem For Malcolm was recorded on 14 August 1969 in Paris. As Carles points out, Shepp's choice of musicians was a polemical assertion of both the extremes and roots of free jazz. Shepp saw free jazz as a revolutionary restoration of black values betrayed by subservience to bourgeois concepts of cool. His drummer was Philly Joe Jones, his pianist was Burton Greene, proving that Archie Shepp's New Thing was open to white players, and his bassist was Alan Silva. On side one, Jones played orchestral tympani while Frenchman Claude Delcloo played trap drums. On side two, Delcloo dropped out, Malachi Favors replaced Silva, and trombonist Grachan Moncur III made an appearance. The presence of Hank Mobley – the suavest of the hard bop players – must have raised eyebrows. Shepp recited a poem about Malcolm X in his best Laurence Olivier, high theatrical style, and the music is raw, bluesy and cutting.

The two volumes of *Live In Antibes* were recorded at a festival in a suburb of Cannes by Radio France on 18 July 1970. Shepp had two brass players – trumpeters Allen Shorter and Clifford Thornton – plus a French rhythm section. Joseph Dejean on electric guitar, Beb Guérin on bass and Delcloo on drums. With the inflation of 'live in concert' releases since 1970, it is difficult to reconstruct the shock of releasing this unedited live troubled, frayed, openended workout with a sense of collective musical discussion and long, fabulously inventive solos from Shepp and Thornton. *Live At The Panafrican Festival* took Shepp over the water – along with Moncur, Thornton and Silva, plus pianist Dave Burrell and drummer Sunny Murray – to the first 'panafrican' jazz festival in Algiers (29-30 July 1969). The music is perhaps less successful than Ornette Coleman's inspired responses to the Joujouka Musicians of Morocco on *Dancing In Your Head* recorded four years later (but not released until 1977), but it has its own wailing intensity.

These reissues are lavishly done, reproducing the gatefold sleeves of the originals and pressing the music onto 180g vinyl. It's nice to revive the original graphics: when Charly reissued BYG albums on Affinity in the early 80s, their discrete black sleeves missed some of Georgakarakos's polemic. However, those reissues weren't "24-bit digitally remastered", and to this critic's ears, sounded better. Like original ESP releases, BYG records had incredibly wide and realistic dynamics, making them unsuitable for radio or car play, but quite explosively exciting. They brought the 'in your face' aesthetic of free jazz right into your living room. The sound here is very bright, but the spatial positioning of the musicians in the new mix is less determinate – less in the round – and hence it's harder to hear the music as the interaction of separate musicians. It all sounds flattened to a burnished buzz. It's great that Get Back (a subsidiary of Abraxas) have got these wonderful albums back in print, but they'll face criticism from older listeners, who'll say that the remix has been done with virtual, post-digital ears rather than those educated in the impact of real-space basses, drums and saxophones. If such a translation can make this music comprehensible to the MP3 generation, all to the good – though it will hardly prepare them for the revolutionary shock of encountering musicians of this furious calibre in the flesh.

GARY SMITH & MICHAEL FISCHER
TOMASET: 6 IMPROVISATIONS
EXTRAPLATTE EX503 CD

BY JOHN CRATCHLEY

Guitarist Gary Smith first came to prominence in the mid-70s with The Acme Quartet performing improvised fusion. In the 80s, however, he took an extended recording sabbatical that lasted almost a decade. Since then, he has produced a series of exceptional albums. Add this one to the list. The period away from the recording scene gave him time to nurture and solidify an absolutely unique signature on his stereo electric guitar. He is perfectly at home in either solo or group settings. His partner on this recording, tenor and soprano saxophonist Michael Fischer, has equally impressive credentials, and together they produce music of power and delicacy.

Recorded live and spontaneously direct to minidisc on a recent European tour, *Tomaset* captures both the intimacy and immediacy of improvised music at its best. Smith is most recognisable for his undulating pendulum swings along the length of the fretboard, which he enhances with his unequivocal directness and openness of tone. He can switch from light, fingertip touches to fluid note runs or heavy, concrete blocks of sound within an instant. Fischer matches this arsenal with an equal diversity and accuracy. His soprano tone ranges from a reedy screech to a breathy dulcet sigh, and he is expressive in either short, staccato bursts or complex, sinewy forays. He can also match Smith for power, as his tenor playing demonstrates. Both players have a penchant for the percussive, with Fischer using the 'slap key' technique to produce a range of air-primed pops (not unlike the technique employed by Pharoah Sanders), and Smith tapping the over-amplified guitar strings, especially in the bass register, to great effect. The guitarist also uses controlled feedback to produce banshee wails of spine-tingling invective, or gentle, murmuring hums to coincide with Fischer's vocal interjections.

Here, both players wield their improvisational power with discrimination. Tone and texture never jar, even though they are frequently juxtaposed, and it is always possible to differentiate every nuance. Recorded in what Fischer describes as a dining room with minimal technical enhancement, the CD captures the ebb and flow of their combined approach to perfection.

SPACEWAYS INC
VERSION SOUL
ATAVISTIC 132 CD

BY JULIAN COWLEY

Spaceways Inc came into existence out of a need to pay dues to the music of Sun Ra and George Clinton. *Thirteen Cosmic Standards* (Atavistic) was the immediate result. On its sequel, *Version Soul*, Chicagoan reedsman Ken Vandermark and drummer Hamid Drake and Boston-based bassist Nate McBride open their hearts with a set dedicated to various heroes.

Six Vandermark compositions have explicit dedications: reggae keyboard maestro Jackie Mittoo, musical director of Coxsone Dodd's crucial Studio One label, Serge Chaloff, one of

The Boomerang

New reissues: rated on the rebound



Pawns in the game: Tortoise

It may have been Def Leppard who said *"Let's get the rock out of here"* in 1992, but it was **Tortoise** who put those words into practice two years later. Eight years after it started a mini-evolution in underground rock aesthetics, *Tortoise* (Thrill Jockey 013 CD) re-emerges, looking and sounding as contemporary as it did back then. It's hard to say whether this is the result of the album's visionary nature or just the sad state of indie rock. Regardless, this remains the Chicago quintet's best record; that is, if you can get beyond those titles ("Onions Wrapped In Rubber", "Spiderwebbed") and that bass which mopes and drags around like a moody teenage boy on a shopping expedition with his mother. Actually, the worst title is also the best. "Magnet Pulls Through". Not since Stezo's "Freak The Funk" has there been such a perfect marriage of word and sound. But language isn't the point here: groove (I guess you could call it that) is. Not groove in the sense of Sabbath, Stones or Shalamar, but in a post-Pigpen Grateful Dead, Eno-ish, rut/repetition sense: gentle, almost ashamed, meandering pulse; big, blotchy blocks of colour; no definite articles but lots of dangling modifiers. Strangely enough, the most 'rock' track here is called "Ry Cooder", and has a brief and restrained bout of rude guitar Tourette's syndrome and vibes that modulate from Arthur Lyman to "Riders On The Storm" about midway through. (PS)

On the trajectory of 20th century modernism, the late, great French comedian and film maker **Jacques Tati** falls somewhere between the Japanese director Yasuhiro Ozu and Kraftwerk. Each approaches the chimeras of technological change with a mixture of bemused scepticism, bafflement (well, OK, not Kraftwerk in this instance) and a melancholy awareness of the passing of old ways. Tati choreographed his encounters with the more absurd manifestations of postwar modernity to wittily constructed soundtracks combining whirring, hammering, chirruping and groaning sound effects with appropriately comic music variously derived from the circus, the cafe salon, a village parade or a very French style of le jazz. Tati's main themes are collected on the handsomely mounted *Jour De Fête etc* (Naïve K1611 CD), first issued in France five years ago as part of the Travelling/Le Cinéma Ça S'Écoute series. Skillfully programmed in self-contained clusters of tunes, dialogue snippets and signature sound effects, the set works surprisingly well without the pictures. Quite some accomplishment, seeing how Tati dialogue is sometimes more about phonetic caricature than comprehension. His musical collaborators supply him with wonderfully agile, economic arrangements that point up the Tati character's stiff-gaited and stumbling negotiations of modern life, even as they throw a banana skin under them. Franck Borsellini's music for *Mon Oncle* (1956-58) – Tati's funniest demolition of modern living's lust for novelty – weaves strands of le jazz hot, piccolo swoops, clattering drum breaks and prancing piano around one of the greatest, not to mention daftest film motifs ever conceived. (BK)

Anyone wondering where the Catalan thriftshop/toytown composer Pascal Comelade gets it from need look no further. Another title worth investigating from the same Le Cinéma series is **Louis Malle**'s *Milou En Mai etc* (Naïve K162 CD), the French director who famously invited Miles Davis to improvise a score for his *Lift To The Scaffold*. If nothing from the films featured in this set reach that peak, the best of them – notably Fiorenzo Carpi's metropolitan, le jazz hot type score for the surreal, racing city comedy *Zazie Dans Le Metro* and the director's daring use of Django Reinhardt's guitar music in his film about a wartime Nazi collaborator, *Lacombe Lucien* – are as comically inventive as Tati's soundtracks. (BK)

Tired of the conditions under which he had to market himself as a musician, **Ornette Coleman** drastically raised his minimum salary and priced himself out of the New York clubs for two years after his Town Hall concert of 1962. After returning to public performance in 1965, he set out on his first European tour, arriving in Sweden in December. The new trio featured David Izenzon on bass and Charles Moffett on drums. Izenzon was one of the most virtuosic bassists in jazz, with an extraordinary arco facility. Charles Moffett, a more traditionally groove-driven drummer, provided a brilliant foil to both saxophonist and bassist. The trio were captured live at the Golden Circle club in Stockholm, and the resulting albums have long had a canonic and iconic status. *At The Golden Circle, Volumes One And Two* (BLUE NOTE 7243 53551B27 2XCD) are now expanded on CD with alternative takes and one completely new track. All compositions are by Coleman. The stiff, childlike "European Echoes" stands out as distinctive, and "Morning Song" is a beautiful ballad, but mostly the themes are jumping off points for improvisation. Coleman plays trumpet and violin on "Snowflakes And Sunshine" only, where his playing is a triumph of intensity over technique. The uptempo "Faces And Places" speeds up alarmingly on both versions. In his excellent musical biography of Coleman, Peter Niklas Wilson comments that after the extravagant recordings by the trio in Paris in November, released as *Who's Crazy?*, the Golden Circle set could come across as "downright regressive... much less adventurous... the rhythm section performs fairly conventionally, and refrains from surprising tempo changes and metric dissolution". But Moffett's metric turnarounds on "The Riddle" are pretty astonishing, and Coleman unleashes a flood of invention throughout, with Izenzon in phenomenal form. The reissues have been remastered by Rudy Van Gelder in 24-bit sound, but the mushy original vinyl disguised some deficiencies of the live recording, which seems to improve through the set. Regardless, these are landmark recordings, and transcendentally wonderful improvised music. (AH)

Alto saxophonist Trevor Watts formed **Amalgam** in 1967. *Prayer For Peace* (FMR 96 CD) was recorded in May 1969 and was initially issued by Transatlantic Records. The first four tracks feature Watts with drummer John Stevens, and the double bass of Jeff Clyne. Barry Guy plays wonderfully rich bass on the concluding title track. As early members of the Spontaneous Music Ensemble, the participating musicians knew one another's playing intimately. Creative listening, concentrated responsiveness and total dedication shape every moment of their music in this context too. Amalgam, as its name suggests, was designed to channel free improvising skills and energies into a mix of other musics – jazz's outer limits and deeply rooted folk traditions in particular. Albert Ayler shared those horizons and his influence is palpable on the opening "Tales Of Sadness". "Prayer For Peace", magnificently and movingly ceremonial without a hint of ponderousness, is clearly infused with awareness of Celtic folk tradition. Stevens's fierce imagination accentuates and lifts a little higher each soaring phrase, and Guy glows. Elsewhere, Ornette Coleman and John Coltrane are equally in evidence. Those great musicians may have blazed the trail but that doesn't diminish the significance of *Prayer For Peace*. It was not a terrific British jazz album; it was, and is, a terrific album, without any delimiting conditions. (JC)

Before The Sugarcubes and her solo career and after her stint in the hardcore group Tappi Tikarras, Björk (then spelling her name 'Bjørk') was a member of communard post-punkers **Kukl**. The group's frontman Einar Örn had studied in London and had connections with anarcho-syndicalists like Flux Of Pink Indians and Crass, who released the group's two records on their own label. *The Eye* (One Little Indian TPLP325 CD) is very much of the period (1984) – particularly Björk who had yet to admit pleasure into her vocals – sounding like a less polished Siouxsie And The Banshees jamming with either an Andean panpipe group, Shakatak or Killing Joke. *Holidays In Europe* (One Little Indian TPLP326 CD) was released in 1986 and stands the test of time a little better with a sparser, tougher, more splintered groove. (PS)

The main aim behind Austin, Texas producer Lelan Rogers's International Artists label was to show that it wasn't just California that had a psychedelic rock scene blooming in its backyard. LA may have had The Byrds and The Doors, but Austin had **The 13th Floor Elevators**, a group who were fronted by the mysterious Roky Erickson (who would later confess to being an alien from another world) and featured the electric jug blowing skills of Tommy Hall who would supply the warbling backbeat for the group's classic "You're Gonna Miss Me". Their 1966 debut album, *The Psychedelic Sounds Of* (Sunspots SPDT5D1 CD), remains a supreme example of acid rock at its finest that makes the majority of other so-called psychedelic music sound lame by comparison. Rightly hailed as a masterpiece by Lenny Kaye on his *Nuggets* compilation for Elektra, it has continued to influence successive generations of groups who recognised its power. One early convert was Television, whose cover of The Elevators' "Fire Engine" from the same album advanced the unique artistry that Erickson once possessed before he burnt out most of his brain on hallucinogenics. By the time The Elevators had recorded their third album *Bull Of The Woods* (Get Back GET615 LP) for Rogers in 1969, much of the self-inflicted drug damage was already done. Hounded by the authorities, the group were now coming apart and their final record lacks the rush which made their debut such an exciting ride. That said, however, *BOTW*, a series of shadowy sketches and haunted blues dirges that drag you into their leader's nightmarish world of mental torment and pain, shows the dark side of psychedelia like no other album can. Not for the squeamish. (EP)

As well as The Elevators, International Artists had a roster of acts that included such groups as The Red Krayola, Bubble Puppy and The Golden Dawn. The label also signed veteran bluesman **Lightning Hopkins** to record *Freeform Patterns* (Get Back GET7501 LP), a one off collection of recitations and earthy blues plodders which feature Elevators bass player Duke Davis and drummer Danny Thomas as part of the line-up. Although *Freeform Patterns* barely lives up to the psychedelic cover it comes packaged in, the record remains a desirable curiosity for both blues buffs and 60s rock collectors. (EP) ☐ *Reviewed by Julian Cowley, Andy Hamilton, Biba Kopf, Edwin Pouncey and Peter Shapiro*

the finest exponents in jazz of the bantone saxophone (Vandermark has now added bantone to his armoury), Larry Graham, pounding electric bassist with The Family Stone and Graham Central Station; drummer Zigaboo Modeliste, swamp funk engine of The Meters, righteous free jazz saxophonist Frank Wright; plus painter Mark Rothko, whose meditative wavelength has harmonised with an astonishing range of musical sensibilities.

Other unidentified currents flow through this taut, vital music. McBride's three pieces name no names but key presences are felt, not least on the concluding "All Frequencies", where Vandermark's clarinet sounds like a melodica as he engineers a real time virtual encounter between King Tubby and the Upsetter in Chicago. Drake is a marvellous reggae drummer – make that a marvellous drummer, full stop. In particular, McBride (on electric bass) is outstanding, technically and emotionally. If *Version Soul* invites influence-spotting, you can also listen to it straight, as these three superb musicians are making music that's incredibly alive.

STEROID MAXIMUS
ECTOPIA
IPECAC IPC28 CD

BY MARTIN LONGLEY

Most of Jim Thirlwell's aliases are variations on the Foetus theme dating back to the early 1980s, but his Steroid Maximus outlet involves the strengthening of an orchestral line begun at the end of the decade. This is big vista music, following the ever growing trend for imaginary movie soundtracks. Even though Thirlwell doesn't formally state that this is the case, these pieces reek of celluloid, scavenging off several eras of scoring, mangling countless genre motifs. Secluded in his Self Immolation studios in Brooklyn, Thirlwell works alone, obsessively overdubbing drums, keyboards and guitar, but giving his vocal cords a rest for the most part. When he does sing, it's as a backing vocalist.

"The Tremble" effortlessly moves swiftly from brooding Bernard Herrmann string clouds to humping breakbeats, slipping in some 1950s noir flute trills en route. This could be described as Industrial loungecore, sometimes languishing in open spaces, at others compressed into a suffocating steel cube. "Seventy Cops" muscles in with an 80s electro bassline, its slasher flick vocal chorus pitched somewhere between Ennio Morricone, Lalo Schifrin and John Carpenter. Sex Mob trumpeter Steve Bernstein makes the first of three appearances, burbling hot-breathed suggestiveness through his mute. Blaring horns, pattering vibes and surging guitar initiate a chase sequence, the siren voices returning for "Bad Day In Greenpoint", bathed in a sickly aura. On "Tarmac A Gns-Gns", Hawaiian steel guitar weeps beside "Silver Machine"-style synth oscillations. "Pusher Jones" operates over a rolling piano bassline, with Bernstein returning to help build a breathless rush of excitement. With "Chaiste" rippling vibes over dense rock drum blocks, and "Enzymes" combining gamelan gongs and qawwali harmonium, Thirlwell certainly relishes throwing everything into the mix. Yet his elements are always exactly arranged, bound by a principle of cinematic dynamism.

JAMES TENNEY
FORMS 1-4
HAT (NOW) ART 2127 2XCD

BY PHILIP CLARK

American composer James Tenney has the curious reputation: he's variously praised and criticised for being a distiller of experimental impulses into music that contains as many reference points as his models tried to overturn. Written for a large mixed ensemble in 1993 and performed by the German group musikFabrik, *Forms 1-4* are dedicated to Edgard Varèse, John Cage, Stefan Wolpe and Morton Feldman respectively. Each piece opens with an explicit allusion to its dedicatee that soon melts away, as Tenney's own processes come to the fore.

The most striking of the *Forms*, number four, manages to imply Feldman's delicate orchestral flushes and economic harmonic palette without sounding anything like him. Beautifully heard harmonic deserts and unlikely instrumental pairings intermingle with hectic stillness, as Feldman's concepts and spirit are reapplied, refreshed and reclaimed. In fact, the basic material for each of the works is taken from the overtone series resulting from the note 'E', and structured according to Tenney's expansion of Cage's open-form 'time bracket notation'. Cage's original ideal was to scupper the relationship between harmony and rhythm, opening his works up to harmonic non-intention; in the Cage-inspired *Forms 2*, such coincidences are lost to predictable formalism, which takes a tortuously complex route to arrive at a conventional result.

Both *Forms 1* and *3* (dedicated to Varèse and Wolpe) use the tougher instrumental territories of their subjects as the base for some powerful portraits. A former Varèse pupil, Tenney co-opts his teacher's characteristic dense wind clusters as a starting point, before the melange is pared down to sparsely arranged sounds stripped of their context.

On these discs, Tenney's *Forms* are interleaved with works by their dedicatees. Varèse's *Octandre* gets a mild treatment, but Cage's *Seven* is wonderfully loose and playful. Stefan Wolpe's *Piece For Trumpet And Seven Instruments* and Feldman's early graphic score *Numbers* complete a worthwhile set that underscores the difficulty of using experimental techniques divorced from their original social purpose.

TICKLISH/FIZZARUM
SPLIT EP
TEXTILE VYNILE SERIE02 12"

JACKIE O MOTHERFUCKER/ VIBRACATHEDRAL ORCHESTRA
SPLIT EP
TEXTILE VYNILE SERIE03 12"

MAHAYONI MUDRA/ DOCUMENTS
SPLIT EP
TEXTILE VYNILE SERIE04 12"

BY EDWIN POUNCEY

In the grand tradition of BYG's legendary Actuel label, fellow French experimental label Textile has launched a vinyl only series which concentrates on electronica, avant garde and improvisation from around the world. Each side of these three split releases is taken up by a different artist. Perhaps adopting Sun Ra's treatment of records as 'cosmic newspapers', the trilogy captures various live performances on tape and releases the results untouched. Like Ra's Saturn releases, these recordings are somewhat rough edged, but the rawness underlines their snapshot attempts at catching the moment. Sound quality notwithstanding, the six performances here are boiling over with ideas, flashing up a veritable gallery of sound pictures.

Live, London based electronica quartet Ticklish visually accompany their sampled sounds with projections; without the images, "Rubato" still evokes the powerful illusion of being surrounded by artificial wildlife. Synthesized frogs and exotic electronic birds call to each other, as Ticklish plunge deeper into a virtual urban rainforest. On the other side, Russian electronica group Fizzarum blend Enoid Ambient space glide with hard edged computer riffing to generate a force field that confidently sucks in all continents. Adding a computerised tabla rhythm, "Tond Seven" hangs ten on the back of an electronic ice floe that slowly melts into another glacial sound shape.

Slamming US Improv rockers Jackie O Motherfucker and Leeds experimentalists Vibracathedral Orchestra make an inspired pairing. Jackie O's sidelong "Accent On Science" is a welcome addition to their steadily growing record pile. It's a playful, brain-rattling beatnik hoedown with flute, bells, violin, percussion, sampled TV dialogue and electronic bongo. VO's side consists of two pieces: "Wearing Clothes Of Ash", a Velvet Underground-style drone composition, complete with a tinkling cocktail piano accompaniment, and "Baptism>Bar>Blues", which revisits the rock 'n' roll workout via the full-on filter of VU's "European Son", making it the best of the Vynile batch to date.

But the Mahayoni Mudra/Documents disc runs it a close second. MM's three tracks mix rumbling free Improv with synthesized occult gargling, faulty electrical socket sampling and psychedelic shadow throwing. Its sulphuric ambience is at once disturbing and enthralling. Less demonic but just as absorbing is Documents' "D10 A", a rampant improvised freak jam, which sounds like a convict on the run from ESP-Disk's archives.

TRIO VIRIDITAS
WAXWEBWIND@EBROADWAY
CLEAN FEED CF003 CD

BY BILL SHOEMAKER

Alfred Harth is a good case of how easily we forget. Both as a tenor saxophonist and clarinettist, and as a composer and conceptualist, his incisive powers have been documented for decades. Yet he is still best known for his vital partnership with Heiner Goebbels, and exquisite albums like 1983's *This Earth!* (ECM). In addition, the lengthening intervals between Harth releases makes the arrival of *waxwebwind@ebroadway* worthy of close scrutiny. His debut with bassist Wilbur Morris and percussionist Kevin Norton as Trio Viriditas bears it very well, as its immediate appeal deepens with repeated plays.

The programme begins with a sustained sense of impending fire. Despite Morris's basslines teetering on the brink, and Norton's press rolls and cymbal swells, Harth passes on the ecstatic implications of "From The Earth", coaxing a walking flow with his hard-toned tenor instead of triggering the furies. On the deceptively titled "Braggadocio", he avoids overheating the mid-tempo groove with chest-thumping pyrotechnics, preferring to meander amiably. On most of the remaining ten, generally succinct tracks (Harth wrote five, Norton one and the rest are collectively realised), Trio Viriditas take a mulling, conversational approach to a wide spectrum of texture-rich constructions and well-honed melodies. On both counts, Norton's vibes, heard on five of the first seven tracks, are central.

All of this is not to imply that the trio are incapable of mustering paint-blistering heat. Harth delivers a flamethrowing tenor solo on the closer, "Major Airports", fed by the oxygen-like propulsion of Morris and Norton, whose long established rapport is a major asset. Harth's relative rush to downshift, either by laying out or switching to clarinet is intriguing. Perhaps he considers the ear to be like the iris: too much white hot sound washes out saturated colours and subtle shapes, of which there are plenty on this recording.

VARIOUS
OFF SITE: COMPOSED MUSIC SERIES 2001
A BRUIT SECRET 101/102 2XCD

BY CLIVE BELL

Off Site is a small live space in Tokyo, where improvising guitarist Taku Sugimoto organised the Composed Music Series throughout 2001. Sugimoto first made an impression in Britain as part of last year's Japanorama tour, and has since acquired cult status as a master of understatement. This double CD fizzes with a sense of musicians being on to something, some elusive desire laid by the tail. Paradoxically the excitement is about an ultra-minimal music that hovers on the brink of disappearance. Cagier than John Cage, many tracks are tiny shards of sound surrounded by silence, minuscule gestures dwarfed by the space around them. The music isn't so much motivated by an aesthetic as a dare – how far can we push this? How little sound does it take to make a composition?

"Two Of Them" conforms to this type. over 30 minutes of super-sparse duetting – composed by Sugimoto for turntable by Tetuzi Akiyama and sinewaves by Sachiko M. Sugimoto is also the composer of the acoustic guitar piece closing disc two, "Punkt", incisively performed by Otomo Yoshihide. We are not told how this 'composing' really functions. Sugimoto writes, in a sleevenote as laconic as his playing: "There is almost no distinction between improvisation and composition to accept all the space." But this strange insistence on composition undoubtedly gives the album a special quality; in fact, it feels like 13 pieces musically directed by Sugimoto.

Other groupings are slightly more loquacious – Otomo's "Portable Orchestra" features 16 players on domestic electronic equipment, so food mixers sing along with razors and hair removers. Berlin guitarist Annette Krebs joins a textural trio for three radios, and another for three performers on paper and contact mikes. Sachiko M directs Shuichi Chino on accordion, and Toshimaru Nakamura (of empty mixing desk fame) composes an exploration of highly coloured long notes for Masahiko Okura's alto sax.

There's a certain dryness here – after all, these are live performances in a small space, and any atmosphere has to be hand-cranked by the musicians. The long stretches of silence can be

bewildering when the tense drama of watching the performer is not an option. But this is not a crafted studio album, more a document of some extraordinary musical activity in a special venue.

THE VELVET UNDERGROUND AND NICO

THE VELVET UNDERGROUND AND NICO
UNIVERSAL 5896242 2XCD

BY MIA L CLARKE & SAMANTHA BROWN

Just as every mangy cur has its day, so The Velvet Underground finally get the five star treatment. 35 years after it was originally released by an apathetic record company to – so the myth insists – the wholesale vilification of 1967's peace and love generation, their debut album, *Velvet Underground And Nico*, is treated to a deluxe edition. The lavish new digipack gatefold packaging restores Andy Warhol's original "fully peelable" banana design, while a selection of rare photographs, a brief history and select quotes from American journalists complete the pampering of a legend. Swept up in the project's spirit of luxury and largesse, what was once a standard vinyl album is now two CDs. The original mono mix takes up one disc; the other disc carries the stereo version, which was hurriedly mixed to keep up with the mid-60s developments in hi-fi. The stereo CD runs down the clock with five bonus songs from Nico's debut album, *Chelsea Girl*, the mono set is thicked out with a handful of shortened single and alternate takes.

It would be churlish to deny that *The Velvet Underground And Nico* deserves its million dollar makeover. Yet no other canonised rock classic looks so itchy and uncomfortable in new furs – chances are, the characters populating VU's songs would trade them for junk. But, proclaiming that "yet another generation will be astonished to discover rock's original cutting edge", the album's deluxe trappings are obviously targeting an audience born long after its 1967 release. Well, circumstances beyond our control might have made us late for the feast, but we can read, we do know who The Velvet Underground are, and a few extra baubles won't sell us the legend whole.

The *Velvet Underground And Nico* is, and will endure as, one of the most exciting and uncompromising ruptures in the rock 'n' roll timeline. And it is the music that tells you that, not the wrapping. Heard in its mono version, the totality of the sound reinforces its power, which certainly hasn't been diminished by all the improvements made in hi-fi and recording technology, since the group recorded most of it in four days for less than $3000. The mono and stereo takes differ slightly in timings, mostly resulting from trimmed feedback, but the mono mix is the way the group intended the album to be heard. It was reprocessed for stereo to "soften" the sound. Though the group were castigated for their full-on feedback blitzes and amoral stance at the time, The Velvet Underground's way of layering and compacting frictional threads of sound to create a dense wall of noise has since become daily currency in rock music. But The Velvet Undergound album still draws blood because words, melody and shattering harmonies are perfectly integrated, with each part validating the others, none of them gratuitous. Also, the music responds to the imperatives of Lou Reed's songs, which crackle with the urgency of reportage. Drug habits and the songs about them have changed in the past 35 years, yet the human urges driving Lou Reed's narrators are the same, and the songs tell us plenty about them. With its rising dynamics bringing up its tense rhythmic rush, "Heroin" simulates the opiate taking hold far too graphically to justify the accusations of glorifying its use that some level against it.

Beneath the deluxe sheen, the music will not relinquish its melancholy embrace. The group's singleminded commitment to combining rock 'n' roll with experimental technique – the downtuned guitars, unwieldy, splintering viola, piercing feedback and drummer Moe Tucker's rhythmic stutters – are what make *The Velvet Underground And Nico* historically and musically indispensable. As to the deluxe set's extras, well, the chance to expand people's knowledge of the group has once again gone begging. Including more, if not all of the 30 minute improvisations that bookended their 1967 concerts, such as "The Nothing Song" and "Melody Laughter" (ten minutes were included on the *Peel Slowly And See* box set), would have usefully consolidated their avant garde roots. Instead, the extras include some shortened single versions and those Nico songs from *Chelsea Girl*. If those songs overplay Nico's role in the group, they are

Size Matters

3", 7", 10" and other misshapes

Freebass (not the UK group of old) is the solo project of Tony Gordon. On this one-sided 7", entitled, I believe, *22* (Edition EDITIONXX11 7"), he records some plumping noises on his electric bass, then does some digital mixing, so that it sounds as though your needle is pushing around a big old ball of fluff. As nothing more than a trick, this is a pretty good thing to do. As an artistic gambit it might be even better than that. Either way, the packaging is nice in what looks almost like a classicist Loren Connors mode, and the music offers several fine layers of befuddlement.

Gang Wizard continue to be the little kings of the split-record format. Most recently, they have been spotted sharing a lathe (Blackbean And Placenta NO NUMBER 10") with **Sissy Spacek** (the Pennsylvanian group, not the actress) and it's a doozy. Sissy Spacek are a duo that combines vertigo-inducing gush from actual instruments with extremely noisy programming in a way that is sure to disorient pets. Their tracks are bodaciously rackety in an almost Japanese mode. Gang Wizard's tunes, meanwhile, continue that group's push into the frontiers where feedback flips back on itself, revealing some sort of soft belly that used to rock. Rub it the right way and it'll howl like alligators. This record plays like full wally at any known speed. If you can top that you may eat my best hat.

Just stumbled across another good, almost silent 7" by **Francisco López**, the Spanish composer whose soundscapes often manage to hover at the very edges of existence. I don't really know what the source material was for *Untitled #115* (Edition EDITIONIX 7"), but it could be almost anything. The sides both start off pretty quietly, forcing you to concentrate like hell to figure out if anything is going on. Eventually you notice a throbbing sound, almost at times like an arco bass solo, occurring somewhere under your feet. The sound slowly gets closer, making you feel like some mole musicians are only a few miles away from your resting ass. Then things start to fade a bit, and a wave of comfort washes over both you and your behind. Let it not be said that Señor López does not give value per decibel. In that respect (among others), he surely trumps all the competition.

After searching for a while, it was finally possible to turn up a copy of the recent 7" by **Richard Meltzer, Robert Pollard, Smegma & Antler** (Off Records OFF999 7"). *The Tropic Of Nipples* is the first extant/exportable evidence of Meltzer's long-rumoured immersion in the US noise legend that is Smegma. And this evidence is good. Smegma are their ineffable selves, making a variety of different whizzes that skirt along many edges of known experimental action without specifically aligning themselves with any particular one. When Meltzer blats out his poetry in front of them, they achieve the kind of nihilist low-flow that you usually just read about. It's as great and confrontational as you could hope. The tracks on which Robert Pollard fronts Antler (which may or may not have been one of his pre-Guided By Voices units) are equally jive and funny. Both of these wordsmiths are as loose as cannons, and it's real nice to hear them rolling down hills with musical accompaniment that is equally feckless.

There are few contemporary songsters with pickles in more fires than **Will Oldham**. He seems to emit records as frequently as most musicians release gas. His latest puff of whatsis is a beautiful collaboration with the Dutch photographer Erik Wesselo. Wesselo presents a few of his mysteriously evocative Polaroids (mostly landscapes this time) and Oldham gives us a song that can be used as a soundtrack to the internal movie they generate. It's a good approach to the problem of truly syncretising art forms and *Forest Time* (Artimo NO NUMBER 10" with book) is a nice thing to handle, hear and contemplate. The 'lost ranger' plunking of Oldham gives the mild melancholic edge inherent in Wesselo's photos semiotic amplification. By the time you've played the record a few times and lollygagged your way through the book, you'll feel as though you've become part and parcel of a whole new kind of darkness. Yeah!

The last time I saw Genesis P was at the Monks reunion show in NYC. He handed me his camera and asked me to take a picture of him hugging Eddie Shaw. I did the deed, but it took me several minutes to realise just who this Agatha Christie lookalike was. Thus, it was a special treat to purchase, in the year 2002, a new **Psychic TV** 45. Although it seems probable that it's a reissue of one of the group's million prior releases, let's assume that one of the tracks on *Snowflake/Illusive* (Klanggalerie G53 7") is at least a remix – because I bet these tunes definitely date from PTV's dancier/smarmier just-pre-MDMA period, which means they aren't new. A picture disc, it is also worth noting that this little doll is graced with some of Genesis's crudely evil pen and ink work of the early 80s. What you choose to do with this information will remain confidential.

In an attempt to be open-minded, I sometimes ask friends to direct me to a decent record with a beat. The most recent thing of this sort that has been thrown my way is **Rechenzentrum**'s *Abends, Spät In Der Zukunft/Country Finalis* (Klanggalerie G33 7"). There is a beat to this, but it's at quite a remove from what one expects when that term is bandied about. Here, they build things around a loop-like rhythm that sounds like it was clipped from an early Kraftwerk LP and left to 'find itself' in the Black Forest. What sits on top of this (Western wear motif of the sleeve design notwithstanding) is a rope-like line of nicely subliminal lifts from other genres: gentle rock guitar plucks on one side, a bunch of French guys trying to tap their way out of a submarine on the other. Good enough.

My mind reels a little bit, reading in the sleevenotes that **Small Cruel Party**'s *Ceremonies Of Memory I & II* (Fylkingen FYSP1003 7") was recorded for an unrealised collaboration with Jim Woodring. Woodring's visuals are certainly some of the strangest to have come down the pike since the collapse of comix culture, and it's very nice to imagine this music as the soundtrack to some of his bright, off-centre, psychedelic art. Since Small Cruel Party moved from Japan to the North West US, they have changed their compositional focus from electronic to event-oriented sound generation. They are rarely forthcoming about their sound sources, however, and it's often difficult to discern just what it is they're doing. The material here was supposedly recorded in a ravine; beyond that, it's guesswork. There are times where things sound a bit wet, but otherwise, the motions, gestures or breezes that are captured here are shrouded in pure smoke. Parts of it almost sound like loops, but it's more likely to be somebody eating an apple in real time. Yum. □ *Reviewed by Byron Coley*

nevertheless wonderful examples of the bleached chanteuse's offhand yet elegiac style. They ultimately serve to complete a portrait of The Velvet Underground and Nico as a young group in 1967, at that decisive moment between 'what is' and 'what's next'.

WINFRED E EYE
A BOTTLE, A DOG, SOME MILK, A BOTTLE
LUCKYHORSE INDUSTRIES 003 CD

BY MOSI REEVES

On *A Bottle, A Dog, Some Milk, A Bottle*, Oakland quintet Winfred E Eye create an atmosphere of desperation through a series of dark, mournful ballads. Consistently bleak, each song begins with a premise – whether it's "Riding The Rails" or the drunken louts carousing together on "Dogs Brother" – that quickly turns into a rumination on broken hearts. *"We ain't crazy boys/We're just dancin'*," sings Aaron Calvert, *"Until* we come down/And *it's a long way down."*

Calvert's lyrics are both poetic and oblique, conveying a deep sense of regret. He sings them through a brittle, worldweary voice that recalls both Tom Waits and Mark Eitzel, lavishing attention on observations like *"Your memory you thought/You left behind/Was never robbed/Just lost inside"* as though he were a torch singer pouring out his feelings in some rundown watering hole. At times, he is too emotional, forcing each syllable in "Riding The Rails" until his tale of a vagrant – *"sitting in a train car/I'm going to France"* – sounds affected and unrealistic. On one stray moment, "Monte Rio", you can hear cheering in the background during its recording, unhelpfully breaking the spell they've conjured.

But *A Bottle, A Dog, Some Milk, A Bottle* is less dependent on Calvert's credibility as a suitably downtrodden narrator than the music he and his group make. Marked by keyboardist Dax Pierson and guitarists Mikel Garmendia and Craig Adams's melodies, with backbeats by bassist Chandan Narayan and drummer Josh Kilbourn, Winfred E Eye craft eerie and langorous Americana, adding heft and clarity to Calvert's moody vocals. Tracks like "October Moon" and "Keep The Bed Warm" corral stray sounds – a guitar plaintively picked here, a bass string tugged at there – into polyrhythmic and esoteric workouts that recall Captain Beefheart's mid-70s swamp rock. Winfred E Eye's depression rarely lifts, yet their sad stories leave a lasting impression.

THE FRANK WRIGHT QUARTET
CHURCH NUMBER NINE
BLACK KEYS 7701 CD

BY DAN WARBURTON

After the well received reissue of his two *Center Of The World* albums on Fractal three years back, an even rarer example of Frank Wright's ecstatic jazz is here unearthed and reissued by the French label Black Keys. *Church Number Nine* was recorded in 1970 and originally released in 1973 by the Calumet label, which promptly disappeared, leaving only 300 copies in circulation. The rest were apparently destroyed. The two sides of the original vinyl were originally called Parts One and Two, even though each was recorded as an individual piece. They're run as separate untitled tracks on the CD, whose booklet reproduces the original front and back covers (complete with sleevenotes by Val Wilmer) and also includes a handy complete Frank Wright discography.

The line-up is the same as on Wright's BYG Actuel outing, *One For John*: Wright on tenor, Noah Howard on alto, Bobby Few on piano and Mohamed (sic) Ali on drums. The first piece is a monumental 26 minute slab of holy rolling free gospel, during which Wright extends the tradition of fire music's two most influential saxophonists, John Coltrane and Albert Ayler. The theme is a primordial chord sequence straight out of Ayler's church, while adding additional percussion (when not blowing their horns to bursting, Wright and Howard make an almighty racket on sleigh bells) is a habit Wright evidently picked up from his stint with Coltrane.

Few's solo is particularly explosive, alternating churchy licks with post-McCoy Tyner comping and furious volleys of clusters and glissandi. A rock solid groove kicks in briefly at the 20 minute mark – Ali's drumming throughout is closer in spirit to the raw energy of Sunny Murray than to the polyrhythms of brother Rashied – before the edifice comes crashing down like the walls of Jericho under the blasts of the horns.

The second piece has no theme as such, other than the unharmonised ten-note motif Wright blasts out ten times before he embarks on a solo consisting of tight bursts of energy. He mauls and nips notes to pieces like a famished lion, finally settling on a single tone and doing it to death. Howard is more florid, but Few and Ali's relentless pummelling and Wright's sanctified vocals and percussion eventually push him – and us – into the upper Aylersphere.

JOHN ZORN
IAO: MUSIC IN SACRED LIGHT
TZADIK TZ7338 CD

BY DAVID TOOP

"For the Work is to reduce all other Conceptions to these of Number," wrote Aleister Crowley, "because thus thou wilt lay bare the very structure of thy Mind, whose rule is Necessity rather than Prejudice." Crowley's observations on the Kabbalah are specifically pertinent to this new release by John Zorn, a suite (if that's the word) of seven tracks inspired by Crowley and film maker Kenneth Anger. They may be useful also as a way of evaluating a more general pattern of Zornish inspirations over the years – Slayer, Henry Darger and Maruo Suehiro, for example – some of whom could be considered alarming to genteel sensibilities.

The response to this 'difficult' aspect of Zorn's work tends to fall into one of two camps: either the subject is avoided altogether for fear of dipping too far into controversy, or the PC judgments of American campus politics are used to recall transgressive expression, whether conscious or unforced, back into a contemporary moral framework. The first option is a kind of cowardice but maybe preferable to the second, which habitually invites a confusion between rhetoric, social behaviour and desire (not to mention gossip) on the one hand, and unconscious expression on the other.

Crowley was difficult enough for anybody: a bisexual anti-Semite who conducted many of his sex magick workings with the very Jewish Victor Neuberg; briefly a fascist sympathiser who expressed admiration for both Hitler and Mussolini yet turned British patriot once World War II began, a ruthless user of people weaker than himself, a misogynist, and so on. We don't have to admire Crowley's hopeless confusion of realpolitik with magical doctrine, nor all his interpersonal garbage. We don't even have to interpret his descriptions of magickal events as literal truth, whether Einstein's or Freud's or that proposed by the man who writes a column for *The Sun*. What makes Crowley an important figure of the 20th century is the consistency, thoroughness and intensity with which he attempted to construct and develop his own version of the real, despite sustained attempts at suppression from the British establishment.

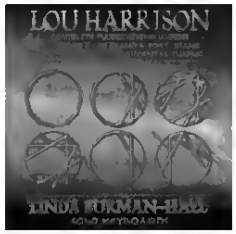
A bigot of his time Crowley may have been, but he promoted freedoms of thought, sexual behaviour and toxic inspiration which we now take for granted and which, in some part and in some obscure ways, have liberated us to think and hear and accuse and scheme in the way that we do. Zorn could never be accused of being an apologist. *Kristallnacht*, the Masada project and his Radical Jewish Culture series on Tzadik are reminders of what the avant garde contrives to forget. What he does is look at the necessity driving the work and drink rocket fuel from that, regardless of issues that might prejudice his rational judgment. Crowley's dictum that "All words are sacred – all prophets true" is quoted.

And after all that, what about the music? Within the CD artwork, an explicit parallel is drawn between the pursuits of magick and music, an equivalence of composer and magician, their tools, methods, assistants and outlets. "The composition and distribution of this CD is thus an act of Magick", Zorn writes. The smear job on Crowley has been so endurningly insidious (a recent television documentary continued the tradition in truly pathetic style – Choronzon save us from occultists) that you might expect *IAO* to be music to give you the horrors. It's not. Like all of Zorn's recent recordings, it has poise, clarity and a polished steel sharpness about it that is positively inviting.

Invitations are close to invocations and this is how the album begins: with gongs and organ chords and perhaps a sense of what Crowley might have desired for his self-confessedly unsatisfactory staging of the Rites of Eleusis at Caxton Hall in 1910. "Sex Magick" follows, as was customary for Crowley (anal, masturbatory, whatever). This percussion rite conjures Mike Davis's phrase 'magical urbanism', through which the efficient city, zoned and regulated in obeisance to the gods of wealth and good order, is infiltrated by more organic forms of organisation and more vital, pagan gods who demand supernatural mathematics in their beats.

Spells are embedded in this music, in the electronic chatter of "The Clavicle Of Solomon", the electric piano groove of "Sacred Rites Of The Left Hand Path"; the succubus temptations of "Lucifer Rising" with its gorgeous female chorus and subtle counter melodies, the metal scream of "Leviathan"; the angular search of "Mystenes". This is not the wickedest music in the world, any more than Crowley was the wickedest man in the world. But remember the spell cast by Kenneth Anger on contemporary cinema with glorious, beautiful, cheap pop music in *Scorpio Rising*. A potent magick in sound. □

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Avant Rock

Reviewed by David Keenan

BABY DEE
LOVE'S SMALL SONG
DURTRO 061 2XCD

On her second album, Baby Dee's heartbreaking songs are once again vehicles for the same obsessive themes she worked over on her first Durtro album, *Little Window*, in particular ideas of Christian suffering and redemption and the shadow of her late father. Dee's songs are almost childlike in their simplicity, and she plays the piano like she's just stumbled over it for the first time. A song like "When I Get Home" plays on her equivocal relationship with her father, as she sings softly of coming home late with the sure knowledge that *"I'm gonna get it when I get home, he's gonna kill me when I get home"*. Yet the her phrasing shades the track with an unsettling ambiguity, somewhere between nostalgic remembrance and terrible hurt. The slight, beautifully gentle coda catches the mood of reverie, as accordion and harp slowly wheeze over the horizon. "My Heart's Come Home To Me" is even better, sounding like one of Nina Simone's testimonials as Dee parts the keys on the piano and sings like she intended that no one to hear her. *Love's Small Song* also comes with an extra CD of birdsong recorded in the backyard of Dee's mother's house in Cleveland, Ohio. "Whatever it is that robins are saying it's terribly true and terribly important," she writes. "And they say it with a sincerity that men could only wish for"

DISCIPLINE
THE SECOND ANNUAL PROCESS OF DISCIPLINE
ARTEFACT ART34 CD

Bearing a sleeve that parodies Throbbing Gristle's *Second Annual Report*, on *The Second Annual Process Of Discipline* French group Discipline take the flatlined electronica of TG's "After Cease To Exist" as their blueprint, creating subliminal soundtracks from clanking, heavily delayed percussion, prayer bowl tones and snatches of field recordings. The resultant wash sounds at points like a sunblinded Taj Mahal Travellers, with nothing but wave after wave of barely fluctuating tone. The best tracks locate eerie, half heard melodies deep within their primordial depths, which occasionally bubble to the surface before being submerged once more. Elsewhere Discipline recall the investigations into area sonorities conducted by id battery, only reconfigured to enable their mapping of whole new subatomic levels.

ERASE ERRATA
OTHER ANIMALS
TSK! TSK! TSK!001 CD

Oakland's Erase Errata lift moves from UK agit-punk outfits like Gang Of Four while giving the nod to the mutant songforms of Captain Beefheart's Magic Band. Vocalist 'Jenny' sounds like Siouxsie Sioux, but put a trumpet to her lips and it's enough to conjure visions of one of Scotland's lesser known form destroyers, The Oog Faced Hermans. "Billy Mummy" sounds like The Fall at their toughest, starting out like "Rowche Rumble" before giving way to a melodic lead line from guitarist Sara that's so wired she could be hammering out Morse code. "Delivery" is closer to early, Julia Cafritz era Pussy Galore, but at points the group's breakneck mania diverts them down detours into wacky realms previously conquered by new wavers like The B-52s.

IZITITIZ
WITH OUR WITH JAZZ
SOUND@ONE/CONDUIT CREATIONS
S@1#59/CC2 LP

IZITITIZ are yet another bunch of hit and run urban improvisors with connections to The No-Neck Blues Band, this time congregating around double bassist Matthew Heyner, who also holds down the strings for the NYC guerrilla jazz outfit Test. *With Our With Jazz* is a rock/jazz bastard with all the scratchy lo-fi hysteria and 'live in a room' feel of a prime Saturn cut. The opening "Conduit" explodes with the kind of teeth-grinding sound that NY No Wavers Mars used to mainline, propped up by an Arkestral sounding rhythm section. When the squeal of the amp dies down, guitarist Carter Thornton tears cascades of speed blurred notes from his six strings that sound like Ascension's Stefan Jaworzyn gonng one of John Coltrane's more doe-eyed ballads. Little eloquent spits of trumpet and flute make "Untitled Peace" sound like one of avant trumpeter Bill Dixon's front-room sketches, while "Naked Man" is a lot more percussive, with oscillating keyboard noise, walls of chant, backwards vocals and some totally squealing saxophone very much in the vein of Arthur Doyle. The second side is one long screaming improvisation with everything turned full on. A winner.

KEMIALLISET YSTÄVÄT
KELLARI JUNIVERSUMI
FONAL FR21 CD

Kemialliset Ystävät – literally Chemical Friends – are a vaguely cultish, communal psych group from Finland, and their first 'official' album (after numerous extremely limited edition cassettes and lathe cuts), *Kellari Juniversumi*, ranks alongside recent releases by Joshua, Floating Flower and Fursaxa (see Outer Limits) as a prime example of outsider music beamed from nowhere. It comes in a foldout card sleeve adorned with the kind of hypnotically ornate folk patterns that used to mesmerise archivist Harry Smith. Inside the gatefold, various aura-adorned hippy heads float above the star field to complete a spread that references the various albums cut by 70s Krautrock supergroup The Cosmic Couners. Indeed, snatches of this album actually sound like outtakes from Timothy Leary's acid tests in the Swiss mountains, with spoken vocals over deep pools of reverb and flashy acid guitar. Elsewhere, simplistic piano parts and Asian percussion combine with enveloping drones that mirror Popol Vuh's soundtrack work or the Velvets-inspired minimalism of Sweden's International Harvester. Meanwhile, their short instrumental workouts bring to mind Japan's Maher Shalal Hash Baz at their most elegiac.

THE MAGIC CARPATHIANS PROJECT
ETHNOCORE 3
FLY MUSIC NO NUMBER CD

This third instalment in Polish group The Magic Carpathians' *Ethnocore* series sees their sound stripped down even further to mostly acoustic fretless bass and vocals. The resulting freed up space only serves to heighten the music's ritualistic overtones, with vocalist Anne Nacher sounding particularly inspired. The combination of incessant bass looping and ghost warbling on "Hard Time" sounds most like some of Nurse With Wound's rhythmic outings circa *Yagga Blues*, although its length, clocking in at more than eight minutes, works against it, as it fails to really accumulate any momentum over the full distance. Nacher's vocals might recall Diamanda Galas, albeit without Galas's dexterity or range, but she's still highly effective within her own parameters, exploding from the silence in red-faced spit. "Oark" is the most interesting track, with Nacher splitting phonetics over a signalling trumpet that parts the darkness with little pointillist spurts.

RUINS
LIVE IN GUANG ZHOU – CHINA
NOISE ASIA NAIM13 CD

KNEAD
KNEAD
PSF PSFD128 CD

On paper I'm most definitely a Ruins fan. The combination of Tatsuya Yoshida's multi-limbed approach to the kit and Hisashi Sasaki's screaming quicksilver basslines should make for a worldbeating team, but I've yet to make it all the way through one of their discs without wincing. In reality they sound like one of those college-rock outfits that are always getting dragged away in straitjackets in their latest video. *Live In Guang Zhou – China* is more of the same, showy, breakneck tempo changes, itchy bass solos and embarrassingly mannered vocals. Their "Progressive Rock Medley" is about as much fun as John Oswald's *Plexure*, as fragmented, split-second riffs shoot past with just enough time for you to tell your Purples from your Crimsons. Haw haw.

The Knead disc hooks up Keiji Haino with Ruins for a series of high octane punk jams. Although Haino has rarely come up against such a rigid rhythm section, it's fun to hear him simply crank out heavy, drilling barre chords. Things work best when the Ruins drop back enough to allow Haino's guitar and vocals to be enveloped in space before falling in behind him at their ludicrously doomy best. It's certainly not a key Haino release, but when the group are firing on all cylinders, as on the raging third track, they're powerful enough to take on all comers.

SOIXANTE ÉTAGES
ASBL
33REVPERMI 2206 CD

This French big band play clunky, would-be monolithic rock, buttressed by the kind of cranked, monomaniacal riffing that made High Rise such a drooling proposition. "Mahtahc" speeds out of the gate on two hot wired chords undermined by the kind of fleshy glitch work that makes you feel as if something huge is lurking just out of earshot. As the glue binding the rhythm section starts to melt, they fall into the kind of ragged, post-Can jamming that lit up the second Swell Maps album. They then don lycra for the second track, "Segoots", which has the kind of smeared mascara swagger that defined The Stooges circa "1970". cut up with jittery melodica and what could be a heavily phased cut-up of Allen Ginsberg. Ginsberg's vocal chords are certainly present on "Tevlev", a track that starts like the group are about to kick into AC/DC's "You Shook Me All Night Long" with Ginsberg's *"Fuck me in the ass/Suck me/Come in my ears"* – a hilariously queer corollary to Brian Johnson's macho come-on.

SUNBURNED HAND OF THE MAN
THE BOOK OF PRESSURE
MANHAND 006 CD-R

The Book Of Pressure is the latest handmade epistle from Boston's Sunburned Hand Of The Man, a street gang of indeterminate number whose members boast mastery of the unknown tongues of free music, building precarious, gravity-defying sound structures from pipes, horns, shakers, drums and the liberating spark of electricity. *The Book Of Pressure* is their best set yet, a series of freakouts that take the non-musicianly fervour of early Red Krayola and marry it to the kind of inflammatory communal music practised by utopian hippies like Father Yod's Ya Ho Wha 13 and the original incarnation of Amon Düül. Beneath the enraptured sounds of this eternally peaking orchestra vocalist John Moloney, aka The Reverend, comes over like he's attempting to bring down the skies, as he spews reams of free associative verse into the heavens, goaded ever onwards by the liberating howls and shrieks of his companions.

UNIVERS ZERO
RHYTHMIX
CUNEIFORM RUNE165 CD

Belgium's Univers Zero are all about chops and drums, and their defiantly angular take on European chamber music will appeal to those with a head for maths and regulations. They came out of the same tumultuous void that birthed Magma, combining vague jazz preening with bombastic Metal and ornamented Gothic stylings. Since their reactivation in 1996 they've lost none of that precision. *Rhythmix* is stuffed to the gills with empty displays of acrobatic instrumental prowess. Their occasional diversions into neo-folk are even worse, with skipping puffs of piccolo that make certain passages sound like soundtracks for TV ads selling sanitary pads. Elsewhere rack toms pan between speakers as studiously 'infernal' machines wheeze beneath an approximation of Elizabethan court music. On this hearing, Univers Zero are Metallica with The San Francisco Symphony Orchestra but minus the sweat stains. A bad thing □

Critical Beats

Reviewed by Philip Sherburne

BIG BANG
HIGHER
ARISION ARI003 12"

Arision is the younger brother of Solana, the Tech-jazz breakbeat label known for buzzing, fusion heavy, post-drum 'n' bass releases from artists like Flytronix, DJ Venom and 4 Hero's Marc Mac. Both were founded by Italy's Simone Sentella, who records alongside Pete Herbert as Cuica, and appears here as Big Bang. Much like the Alex Attias project Beatless, Big Bang specialises in clattering, syncopated breaks that mark out a space splashed with broad strokes of colour: on his cover of Roy Ayers Ubiquity's "Higher", the grid is filled in with a simple loop of descending keys and ecstatic vocalisations from an uncredited female singer. It's a simple but effective fusion of Afrobeat and breakbeat funk. Attias turns in an even more thinned out remix, with little beyond the naked stem, thorn and lone drop of blood.

DATA 80
LOVE WAS MADE FOR TWO
FORCE TRACKS FT45 12"

Rumour has it that Data 80, Force Tracks' mysterious new cyborg pop-House persona, is in reality a certain heavy-lidded Swede given to plaids and pencil beards. Whatever his passport says, his debut 12" is a brilliant assemblage of funk, Techno and a perverse flourish of new wavy pop. It's no electroclash, though: the original version, thick with analogue polka squelch and heavily vocoded rhyming couplets, hints at the same sort of synth-pop that Schneider TM has been busy fermenting in his brushed steel cylinders. But Håkan Lidbo's mix cuts the liqueur with fizzy beats and a dash of Techy bitters, dropping it in a glass so cold your fingers burn to the touch. MRI's version, on the other hand, steps out with some of the swagger they've been refining in their recent catwalk collaborations with, ahem, Dior Homme's Hedi Slimane, with a sultry, Garagey swing recalling the glammest of Techno gadabouts, the heavily syncopated and slinkilicious Safety Scissors.

FOCUS
HAVING YOUR FUN
VERSATILE VER030 12"

The second 12" teaser for Phil Asher's upcoming album as Focus, "Having Your Fun" sees Asher in deep disco mode. His own extended mix of the track is a halftime House tune built atop a slinky walking bassline and blocky piano chords that are one part Philly International, one part New Jersey Garage. Andreas Mendez's jubilant vocals – oddly reminiscent of Neneh Cherry – dart like swallows through the skeletal rhythmic frame. 4 Hero's Oego McFarlane takes a smoother approach on the first of his two remixes, melting it all down and smearing it like butter on toast, the piano and bassline are kept intact, but a more angular House/not-House shuffle is swapped in for the original's aerated break and echoing handclap. On his second version, Oego turns off the flame and lets it all congeal in a waxy mass of marbled chords.

OLIVER HACKE
LICHTUNG EP
BACKGROUND BG025 12"

PORTABLE
FUTURISTIC EXPERIMENTS 5
BACKGROUND BG026 2X12"

After remixes for Akufen and a debut single for Cologne's Trapez imprint, Germany's Oliver Hacke reveals four more tracks of deep, chugging minimalism via Andy Vaz's Düsseldorf-based Background Records. That's not huge news after all, in a few short years, Background has turned out more than two dozen releases mining this particular vein. What stands out here, though, is Hacke's range. The untitled A1 is all ruched ribbon and shirred static, and the A2 is much the same, with a stealthy funk bassline thrown into the mix. But the B1 slips a disc and trips into a syncopated, round-shouldered lope, while the B2 fuses flared electro buzz and flashes of organ – it's some strange boogie Techno, and one of the groovier tracks on Background. The fifth instalment of the Futuristic Experiments series – from South Africa's Portable, who has previously recorded for Sutekh's Context imprint – is a much different affair. Largely shorn of obvious tonal elements, it's a patchwork of fingernails on slate, rubber band twang, and electric fuzz, caught somewhere between Chicago House, Pole and William Basinski's shortwave radio collages.

RICHIE HAWTIN + STEVE BUG
LOW BLOW
M_NUS M_NUS9 12"

One side. Two collaborators. Three, maybe four distinct sounds. Eight minutes running time. Somehow the numbers don't add up, though, because for all the simplicity of the thing, and all its aerated vacancy, this is one of the heaviest records to appear this year. It's certainly my favourite thing from either producer in some time. Lurking along at half-speed, it's built on a lazy kick drum, a smarmy Acid bassline that sounds like classic Plastikman left on the dashboard in the hot sun, and a brittle smattering of percussion that might be sampled from a game of pick-up sticks. The most distinctive element is a single ride cymbal on the off-beat: it shimmers and smudges as though held aloft on heat waves. Like I said, the whole equation rests on some fuzzy math, as shaky as the accounting tricks bringing down American business, and even more brilliantly devastating.

IOMOS MARAD
"LIFE (LIVING IN FOUL ENVIRONMENTS)"/"FREE"
ALL NATURAL AN20 12"

Chicago's always on-point All Natural label, home to Daily Planet's rousing "We Like To Party", brings the dusky flipside to that track's exuberant dawn with Iomos Marad's "LIFE (Living In Foul Environments)". Dug Infinite, who provided the rousing reggae backing on the Daily Planet tune, wipes the smirk off his face and drops a mournful guitar lick that eddies like a plastic bag whirling in an air shaft – the perfect accompaniment to Marad's bleak, documentary rhymes. "Free", produced by Memo of The Molemen, sends the word flying high above the detritus of "LIFE" like a balloon, a banner, a beacon, and Marad's simple invocation, *"If you wanna be free/Stop talkin' 'bout it/And let's get free"*, sparks the light behind the lens.

JEFF SAMUEL
NEW AGE MOLD
EMOTICON EMOT009 12"

CONNECTIVE ZONE
QUERTY EP
EMOTICON EMOT010 12"

Ohio's Jeff Samuel, with previous releases on 7th Cith and Lo-Fi Stereo, deviates from his usual Tech-House leanings on this EP for Tom Churchill's Emoticon label. Three of the four tracks here follow a tempo seldom pursued by dancefloor-inclined artists: somewhere between House and downtempo, they shuffle along at a lazy, andante clip, all stutter-skip drums and pining chimes in the high end. But it's the decidedly non-meandering "New Age Mold" that makes this record worth having: like some field recording from a virtual aviary, a neck snapping, woodpecker-beaked nimshot tattoo chastens the bassline while a gossipy chorus of chirps and chatters floats down from the power lines bobbing overhead. Connective Zone, the Lincoln based duo of Graham Sims and Simon Button, stick to much more familiar forms of 'intelligent' Techno, marked by jittery, post-electro drum patterns, glassy string pads, and wistful arpeggios. It would be tempting to call it retro, but for the fact that the style's never really gone away. "Querty", however, reaches even further back, borrowing the uneasy twang of late 80s Depeche Mode, although never indulging as unashamedly as Coloma's "Transparent" (Ware), which favours the same period.

THE STREETS
WEAK BECOME HEROES
LOCKED ON/679 679L007TR 12"

Mike Skinner's droll, stream of consciousness narration reels off like a slow pan along a dead end alley, and it makes a weird fit for the vintage Garage – Paradise, that is – of the backing track. In Ashley Beedle's hands, though, the awkward, off-beat phrasing and that "same *piano loop [that] loops over/And over and over*" kicks the frown upside down; Skinner's ever overcast skies clear for the space of a song, and the dead end alley fills with carnival sounds for a moment of pure jubilation. On the flip, Freaks' Luke Solomon and Justin Harris, not nearly so nostalgic, are happy to twiddle a knob or two and knead it all into their particular kind of stoned grind.

SUPERSOUL
BACK A WALL
METATRONIX MX4106 12"

Miami's Omar Clemetson returns with another Supersoul single that's just as off-kilter as his last, the clangorous "Sound Clash". This time, though, on lead track "The Sickness", instead of clanking breakbeats, he sticks to a cooler, Techier sound based on cnsp drum machine hits and staccato horn stabs. But the rhythm staggers like a robot come unplugged, suggesting the kind of handmade MPC beats at which Antipop's M Sayyid excels. The booming Judah Manson sounds like an American cousin of Roots Manuva, though grimmer and much less high. Push Button Objects' mix is colder still, shrouded in dry ice smoke and perilously brittle beneath Manson's lumbering drawl. "The Remady" (sic) sounds a bit like standing dead centre between two sound systems, one playing "Sound Clash", the other "The Sickness" – horn stabs pan from wall to wall, while Sess's toasting is the butter to Manson's dry as a bone bread.

VARIOUS
ELECTRIC PANTS EP
PROPTRONIX PROPTRONIX02 12"

In which Matthew Curry and a cast of consultants fire up the machinery at Proptronix Inc and pump out a line of electric pants. His Safety Scissors, of course, make the perfect tool for cutting fabric in a way that's conducive to cutting rugs. "Turn On My Trousers" jigs like a mad wag to the accompaniment of organ smear, ball bearing shuffle and Curry's own falsetto wail. His wide wale "OP" makes for a moderately more conventional design, stitched with added articulation in the knees for that trademark Safety Scissors bounce and kick. Sutekh's "Hosen" is a super padded, breakin' friendly model seemingly cut from nylon and cardboard, while Jake Mandell's "Pandamants" takes the piss out of all kinds of 'Ardkore, Techstep conventions. Ever the loyal opposition, Kit Clayton's "Dyslexic Pants" play the part of the Wrong Trousers in this particular wardrobe: all frayed wire and melted circuit board, these electric pants go up in smoke before they even leave the changing room.

VARIOUS
MORE GDM VOL 2
TIGERSUSHI TSR002 12"

After a debut single juxtaposing Cluster with John Tejada, Paris's Tigersushi returns with another instalment of the "More God-Damned Music" series. The card catalogue-styled design suggests that they're carrying out the MO of Tigersushi.com, a sort of research centre for electronic music, with a physical extension to their sound library. Here they resuscitate two cuts from Max Berlin, a French disco producer whose one and only album appeared in 1978. "Elle Et Moi" is a radiant, sunny day swirler caught between disco, reggae and Ambient, spun out of piano, funk guitar, strings, bongos and a Gainsbourg-style monologue sneaking snakelike under the dappled green. For "Dance For Me (Edit)", Joakim Bouaziz carves a lithe and minimal disco-House track out of the original's slack breaks and handclaps, with enormous carnival horns and histrionic vocals bleeding through at every suture. For a contemporary perspective, Tigersushi turns to sometime disco dabbler Maunce Fulton for a summertime daydream that erupts briefly into sexy slap bass before slipping back into hovering nonbeing. □

Dub

Reviewed by Steve Barker

HORACE ANDY
FEEL GOOD ALL OVER ANTHOLOGY 1970-1976
TROJAN TJDDD037 2XCD

Massive Attack's sponsorship of their favourite reggae vocalist on the classic *Blue Lines* wasn't so much of a revival for Horace Andy as just another chapter in a career that already spanned 25 successful years. Like many other Jamaican musicians, he started out at Studio One and then hired himself out to the producer of the day, but what marked out Andy was the unique quality of his voice and his judicious selection of material. Most of the picks on this double set are from his mid-1970s Bunny Lee/King Tubby period, but the highlights come in the form of his two Keith Hudson cuts with Earl Flute, "Don't Think About Me" and "Satan Side" – both about as dark as reggae gets – and the remarkable "Poor Man Style", and its sung version "Materialist", cut for Niney The Observer. The inclusion of such tracks points out the problematic nature of creating an anthology or even a retrospective in the reggae business. A definitive collection would have to include "Spying Glass" cut for Bullwackies, "Rock To Sleep" cut for Pablo and the original of "Skylarking" for Coxsone, plus tracks from Gussie, Phil Pratt, Santic, Derrick Harriott, Tappa Zukie and more. In other words, it's impossible.

DENNIS BROWN
THE PROMISED LAND 1977-79
BLOOD & FIRE BAF039 CD

Originally planned as a DJ-centred collection of Ranking Joe's sides produced by the singer for his UK-based DEB imprint, with the addition of a prime collection of Brown vocals to extend the tracks, the core of Blood & Fire's long awaited Dennis Brown set is now the complete *Joseph's Coat Of Many Colours* album with five 7" and 12" single cuts added as a bonus. Brown had learnt well from his earlier years under the guidance of many of Jamaica's greatest producers, the quality of the material, delivery and production lives up to the best of his later work with Joe Gibbs and The Observer. This is particularly true of "(What About) The Half", one of the best of his many deep roots outings, "Emanuel God Is With Us", which deserves its reprise dubwise as the album's closer, and "A Cup Of Tea". Ranking Joe does get a look in via his toast on "Don't Want To Be No General", but apart from that and the aforementioned dub and extended versions, it's Brown all the way. The real appeal is Blood & Fire's usual impeccable job in releasing such fine work in the kind of quality packaging it deserves.

NINEY THE OBSERVER
SLEDGEHAMMER DUB: IN THE STREETS OF JAMAICA
MOTION FAST012 CD/LP

VARIOUS
ROCK ON: GREATEST HITS FROM THE OBSERVER LABEL
HEARTBEAT HB7678 CD

A dub set of 1977 vintage that was hawked around the streets of London in a pressing of 300 – its original vocal companion, *Deep Down With Dennis Brown* (although my fading memory recalls some of the same tunes showing up on Brown's *So Long Rastafari* album) had appeared some years earlier – *Sledgehammer Dub* is by no means a lightweight affair. The seductive title may entice some first time dub buyers into investigating it, only to wonder what all the fuss is about. But for fans of Tubby, Dennis and The Observer, this is fascinating stuff. "Why Seek More" puts The Observer's trademark fat clavinet sound upfront in the mix, and that's followed by the spookiest mix ever on the tried and tested "Tribulation", a dub so broody it belongs in modern day Brooklyn. Tubby strips out all the vocals, which is a shame, but the mixes find the dubmaster in top form working the dynamics of the tracks to the max. Dave Katz captures Niney's life and times for the sleevenotes and runs though a sharp track by track summary to make this another top package from Motion.

In the past, from the safety of this column, I have levelled justified criticism at the selection on Heartbeat's Niney compilations. This time Chris Wilson gets it spot on with this compilation which, although featuring many of Niney's most loved productions, throws in unreleased takes, disco mixes and 'new to CD' picks. Cornell Campbell's most celebrated sides invariably originated under the control of Bunny Lee, but his finest cut was saved for The Observer, "My Heart Is Clean" (a conscious version of John Holt's "My Heart Is Gone"), which, in the extended form included here, takes in Tubby's dub mix, "Zinc Fence", and Dillinger's toast, "Gate Number". Also present is the beautiful "Weeping" from Junior Byles, which is wonderfully contrasted in the nine minute discomix by I Roy acting out a crazed misogynist role in his hilarious DJ version, "Water Rate". Making up the set are pre-Black Uhuru Michael Rose with full version of "Guess Who's Coming To Dinner", the 12" cut of Niney's epochal "Blood And Fire", and previously un-released tunes from The Mighty Diamonds and Ken Boothe.

MEDITATIONS
I LOVE JAH
WACKIES W510 LP

STRANGER COLE
TIME IS NOW
WACKIES W210 12"

"In the Bronx, straight up White Plains Road... past Tad's and Brad's and Moodie's, uptown as far as City Line... this is Bullwackie's Country" Lloyd 'Bullwackie' Barnes's out of time deep roots label is now enjoying a higher profile – courtesy of the sponsorship of Berlin's Rhythm & Sound boys – than it ever generated in the early 80s. It's a first time release for this Meditations album, which has mysteriously laid in the vaults since 1981. The six disco-style tracks come in the post-Black Ark vein in which Bullwackie specialised. The harmonies occupy a spot in the centre of The Viceroys, The Royal Rasses and Israel Vibration, mixing the harmony styles on top of varied vocals. The key studio input comes from musician and arranger Clive 'Azul' Hunt whose haunting flute lines float throughout the album's title track which, although the title itself might be something of a roots cliche, turns out to be a lost classic with a mournful, slightly off-key chant only adding to the tune's attractions. That this great album has remained buried until now is perhaps not so surprising, given the lack of serious critical attention the genre has attracted until recently.

Equally impressive is the 12" featuring a killer tune with what sounds like Jerry Johnson laying down a twisted, Rare Groove style guitar intro over a typically brooding Wackies rhythm bed. Be thankful that the guitar isn't left separated in one of the stereo channels or we would soon be suffering from a thousand dance samples. Vocal versions come from old warrior Stranger Cole on "Time Is Now", and Leroy Heptone with the deeper cut, "Revolution". The version, "Take Time", is supplied by Bullwackies All Stars.

AUGUSTUS PABLO
EAST OF THE RIVER NILE
SHANACHIE 45051 CD

ORIGINAL ROCKERS
GREENSLEEVES VINYL GREL8 LP

It's the 25th anniversary of Pablo's follow up to the 'best dub album of all time' (*King Tubby Meets Rockers Uptown*). Those only familiar with the mind melding potential of that epochal set expecting more of the same here will be disappointed. While he continued to develop the 'Far East' meditative style for which he was originally celebrated, *East Of The River Nile* consists largely of instrumentals on which Pablo demonstrated his developing facility for tackling a whole range of keyboard instruments. The inclusion of six extra dubs of tracks from the original album, plus a few contemporary singles, makes this a necessary purchase for Pablo fans.

The primer for Pablo was, and still is, Greensleeves's *Original Rockers*. This was the first attempt at a Pablo compilation, released in 1979, and Chris Lane's selection of tracks has yet to be bettered. It ranges from some of his earlier output – "Rocker's Dub" (Rockers was the name of Pablo's brother's Sound System) and the remarkable "Casava Piece" – to the more sophisticated "Jah Dread" and "AP Special".

ROOTS MANUVA
DUB COME SAVE ME
BIG DADA BD040 CD

Run Come Save Me established Rodney Smith, aka Roots Manuva, as a UK rapper to rival the new styles championed by Mos Def et al in the USA. The overstretching of Rawkus and its absorption into the belly of the beast means no more dub/instrumental vinyl outings from those guys. Thankfully, within Ninja Tune there's room for experimentation for its own sake, and when Roots Manuva versioned a couple of his tunes, which were played out by DJ Shadow and Cut Chemist, more of the same was on the cards. Not strictly a dub album of course, but a collection of reggaefied outtakes and dubbed remixes that sit together more satisfactorily than a set full of wordplay. No matter how skilful or witty, reggae/dub is just as much a singles medium as HipHop. Dub as feeling and attitude, rather than strict technique, is surely a worthy pursuit.

VARIOUS
HUSTLE: DISCO REGGAE: KINGSTON, LONDON, NEW YORK
SOUL JAZZ SJR66 CD/LP

Ska, rocksteady, reggae and ragga all have a tradition of absorbing what was happening musically over the water – both in the USA and the UK – and shamelessly re-expressing it in the idiom of the day. Overlapping with the disco craze in the States, the music that ruled London was lovers rock and the burgeoning Rare Groove scene. A few years ago a compilation like this would have been commercial suicide, but now new rules are being made. I have always been a big fan of lovers rock, a tendency that has often been mocked, and One Blood are a perfect expression of the genre, with their fragile, close to off-key vocals cheekily challenging the underlying bass on versions of Anita Ward's already dubious "Ring My Bell" and William De Vaughn's "Be Thankful For What You've Got". And it goes on, Derrick Laro and Trinity version Michael Jackson's now ridiculous "Don't Stop Till You Get Enough", and even "Rapper's Delight" is found worthy of a retread by Xanadu and Sweet Lady.

VARIOUS
REBEL MUSIC
TROJAN TJA030 CD

Compiled by *Blues & Soul* columnist Dave Hendley and originally released in 1979, *Rebel Music* is a legendary compilation in the history of reggae in the UK. You could gripe about the reissue industry accelerating at such a pace that it's now reissuing itself, but this is one of those all too rare collections that has an agenda and a sound. It may have rocksteady, reggae and dub tracks, instrumental, vocal and talkover tracks, but the album has a *feel*, a downbeat atmosphere settled somewhere between sufferer's records and rude boy tunes – a hazy, foggy rebel vibe. Highlights include the extraordinary gypsy violin on I Roy's "Blackman Time", the staggering production of Keith Hudson's "Melody Maker" and Big Youth's sui generis "S.90 Skank". *(Peter Shapiro)*

VARIOUS
YOUNG, GIFTED AND BLACK
TROJAN TJDDD06 2XCD

Where *Rebel Music* identifies an undercurrent of resistance rippling beneath the sweatshop studios that monopolised Jamaican reggae production and distribution, *Young, Gifted And Black* simply compiles 50 UK hits, spanning ska, rude boy, dancehall, early Upsetter and more. By default it also celebrates the sheer artistry in adversity of singers and players bonded to market-driven capitalism at its crudest. One thing about cutthroat democracy, it'll happily embrace destabilising forces like this set's consciousness raising title track as novelty, so long as it sells. Regardless, Bob And Marcia's more strident take of the Nina Simone anthem still sounds exhilarating, and like much else here, it defeats feelings of overfamiliarity left by Trojan's rotating regurgitations of its catalogue. *(Biba Kopf)* □

Electronica

Reviewed by Jerome Maunsell

AMORPHOUS ANDROGYNOUS
THE ISNESS
FUTURE SOUND OF LONDON FSOL101 CD

Six years on from their last album-length transmission, *Dead Cities*, Future Sound Of London finally re-emerge from the wilderness under their old Amorphous Androgynous moniker. Aside from the worrying title, *The Isness* comes armed with a bizarre press release telling how Garry Cobain has spent the last few years trying to fathom the causes of a mystery illness, and triumphantly proclaiming the duo's new sound as "samplerdelic cosmic rock opera" and "Progtronica". It's not really an apt description for the dynamics of this disc (all guitars, sitars, swirling flutes, strings, vocals), which, though proudly bloated, aren't quite as self-indulgent as you might fear. A whole host of late 60s/70s influences are writ large throughout, from the wibbly-wobbly faux-Syd Barrettisms of the lyrics and Bowie-style choruses, to the endless sitar riffs. At many points, though, this amusingly regressive studio jam session recalls the refried psychedelia of many lesser talents.

AU
NON-EXISTING INPUT
GROND GR12002 CD

The untitled tracks on this CD by the duo of artist/musician Jan Borchers and Paul Klaui were recorded in various living rooms (presumably in The Hague, where Au are based) over the last year and a half. They're all live improvisations, which might explain the documentary feel permeating the album, and there's a textural depth of field to the sounds and drones that Au favour throughout. Rather than focus on conventional melodies as such, the structures here concentrate on sculpting dense, emotive, shifting clouds of ambience and sustained analogue notes, around which heavily reverbed events circle and disperse. Snatched moments of overheard conversations whispering to themselves, soft electronic flutters, and drifting piano chords create a ghostly, grainy, sombre mood, alternately soothing and unnerving.

KATALOG
EIGHT MILES HIGH
KLANG ELEKTRONIK KLANG08 CD

Does Ramon Flugel's surname, which translates into English as 'wing', have anything to do with the bird sounds and the short sample from The Byrds' "Eight Miles High" which begin this record? Any other connection between the Frankfurt producer (who has been part of Acid Jesus, Alter Ego and Primitive Painter over the last decade) and his chosen alias here is pretty hard to fathom. After the brief snippet of The Byrds' Coltrane influenced mock-psychedelia, *Katalog* soon descends into a clinically programmed and chopped collection of treated breakbeats which sit right on the borderline between funkiness and arhythmicality. Attention to detail is the signature running throughout a disparate set of tracks which veer from mightily compressed, rigid 4/4 minimal Techno to Sun Ra sampling and calculatedly freaky jazzisms. The overall feel could have benefited from a slightly looser touch, but this is all masterfully managed, in its way.

FAN CLUB ORCHESTRA
SUN PAPA AND THE FAN CLUB ORCHESTRA VOL 1 & VOL 2
SONIG 22 CD

Belgium's Fan Club Orchestra, led by the brothers Nicholas and Laurent Beaudoux (of Scratch Pet Land), take a highly unusual approach to electronic improvisation. The photo on the back of this CD shows ten musicians performing live, sitting cross-legged on the floor in a circular formation, huddled intently over their instruments – Nintendo Game Boys, pocket sampler, banjomotor effect, mouth percussion, water drums, flute and pianica. Directions are given to this impromptu 'orchestra' via Laurent's drawings on an overhead projector. It sounds potentially dinky, but this disc of edited live recordings on the Mouse On Mars-affiliated Sonig label has a surprising range, running from unholy blasts of machine noise to clattering, itchy constellations of freeform four bit audio painting. However, the group's speciality could well be the construction of melodic, meandering drones that have a uniquely lo-fi charm.

FENNESZ/MAIN
SPLIT 12"
FATCAT 12FAT045 12"

Two aficionados of deconstructed guitar music slug it out on each side of this split 12" to see who can drag the heavily abused and much maligned six-stringed instrument furthest into fresh new territories. Using computer-processed guitar, bowed cymbals and piano frame, Main's Robert Hampson offers a lengthy exploration of dark, bristling ambience and drone which takes up a whole side of vinyl, where static walls of sound filled with intense internal movement bristle, fizz, and occasionally explode into brightness. Thomas Koner's glacial wastes are one reference point, though the atmospheres here are more volatile, less hollow. Christian Fennesz delivers three fantastic tracks, moving from trademark chunks of melodic, opulent distortion and classic chord changes to more austere experiments in faltering rhythms and sound. The final piece, with its relatively untreated guitar stylings, comes across beautifully like an opiated Gastr Del Sol.

LETRASET
SNOWY ROOM
CHAPTER CH40 CD

JEREMY DOWER
MUSIC FOR RETIREMENT VILLAGES
CHAPTER CH39 CD

Letraset is a side project of Nicole Thibault and Julian Patterson, who are perhaps better known as Minimum Chips. Judging from the spare, doodling song structures of *Snowy Room* and the little pearls of gentle ambience that are dotted throughout the album, they use minimal, quaintly old fashioned equipment and have an abiding love for Stereolab. Casio tones, burbling basslines, archaic drum machine loops and, just occasionally, a trombone on the more conventionally songlike tracks give way to mellow but moody homemade abstractions. Jeremy Dower's *Music For Retirement Villages*, also on Melbourne's Chapter label, showcases an equally lo-fi approach which is equally dysfunctional and amiable. It's filled with cute analogue tones that bumble along pleasantly enough. "What's A Nice Sound Like You Doing In A Place Like This" is typical fare: a cartoon-like, mildly melodic and melancholy ditty that wouldn't hurt a fly.

LUSINE ICL
IRON CITY
MAD MONKEY MMR08 CD

KRISTUIT SALU VS MORRIS NIGHTINGALE
MY MINES I
MERCK 009 CD

The genetic traces of Funkstorung's spikily polished production style are smeared all over these two releases from the US. Jeff McIlwain, aka Lusine ICL, is originally from Austin, Texas and currently resides in LA. His latest album comes armour-plated with a metallic sheen and a precision of focus all too rare in the trigger happy world of software/effect fixated computer music. *Iron City* connects the dots between HipHop, abstract electronics and Detroit Techno. Kristuit Salu Vs Moms Nightingale, meanwhile, reaches us courtesy of Miami's Merck label. Despite the artist name, this is the work of just one person (18 year old Jimmy Edgar) with a split personality. The sound on the equally tightly produced *My Mines I* nods more explicitly to Funkstörung's mix of The Wu-Tang Clan and Prefuse 73, its stuttering, hyperkinetic, machine-sharpened HipHop cut to shreds, vocals and all.

TAKAGI MASAKATSU
EATING
KARAOKE KALK 14 CD

Takagi Masakatsu's *Opus Pia* CD and OVD compiled the video and soundwork he gathered during extensive travels around the world, from his native Japan to Cuba. *Eating* collects some short pieces recorded between 1997 and 2002, all of which suggest the delightfully transient pleasures of the title. Despite the long germination, these tracks all have a very similar sonic palette: slightly out of time clusters of staccato notes (often sounding like a variation on plucked orchestral strings) that have a stereotypically 'exotic' feel. They tinkle on the ears in delicate waterfall formations which become progressively less enticing and increasingly itchy. Perhaps that's the point: the impossibility of clutching on to momentary pleasures? A slow degeneration of flavour? Take in small, very sweet doses.

MORLEY/VARLEY/NODERN
PERSONAL SETTINGS 2
QUATERMASS QS131 CD

The second instalment of Quatermass's *Personal Settings* series follows the same parameters as before: 15 minutes per act to do, essentially, whatever they want without any restrictions. Although David Morley and Gez Varley (one half of LFO, with Mark Bell) are the established names here, it's the relatively unknown Nodern who makes you sit up and pay attention, with a sequence of five tracks/interludes in wildly different modes. "Pilan" is the standout, and follows a classic electronica blueprint, but startles through its use of melody and searing, trapped white noise. Morley's three pieces of dark ambience and vintage Roland drum machine beats follow similarly familiar models, but operate at a slightly lower level of melodic/emotional intensity. Varley, now apparently based in Germany, ends the disc in refreshingly unpretentious fashion with two deep, but straight ahead cuts aimed squarely at the dancefloor.

MURCOF
MARTES
STATIC DISCOS STA002 CD

FAX
RESONANCIA
STATIC DISCOS STA001 CD

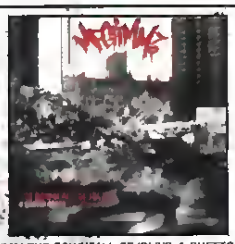
These two Mexican electronica releases on Tijuana's Static Discos label have more in common than just provenance. Of the two, Fernando Corona, aka Murcof, seems to have been gaining slightly more attention of late. *Martes*, with its graceful fusion of orchestral tones filched from Arvo Part and Morton Feldman alongside pristinely cut minimal rhythms and clicks, is a superbly balanced album, arranged very accessibly. Although it teeters on the edge of debasing its sources, thankfully it never quite does. Graphic designer and guitarist Ruben Alonso Tamayo's Fax project sees him sidle into similar territory with equal poise, and a neat line in syncopation. *Resonancia* is calm, twitchy and expansive, and is tougher than Murcof's sound, with primitive beats on some tracks taking centre stage.

VENETIAN SNARES
2370894
PLANET MU ZIO057 CD

All of two months after *Higgins Ultra Low Track Glue Funk Hits 1972-2006*, Canada's Aaron Funk is back with another selection of supremely twisted punk rock electronics. The speed at which he works communicates directly: this collection is nothing if not hyperactive, and is both inspirational and infuriating. "Underground Circus Jesus" establishes the general recipe: a stompingly violent splattermix of drill 'n' bass, with a scattershot, relentlessly inventive approach to structure. Squarepusher's spectre is never far away, though this is, if anything, more extreme. The dark streak of "2370894" peaks with the ultra-Gabba of "Fuck Toronto Jungle", pummelling you hard at over 200 bpm and humorously OTT evil bass stabs and a final burst of rubbish MCing. Or is that trumped by the Satanic Death Metal of "Sybian Rock"? Things settle down at other points, touching on mostly hitherto discovered musical styles, from dub to free jazz. There's even a mournful sample of Morrissey thrown in for good measure – now why did nobody think of that before? □

HipHop

Reviewed by Dave Tompkins



MF GRIMM THE OOWNFALL OF IBLIYS A GHETTO OPERA (DAY BY DAY) CD

Extremely dope debut CD from downtrodden NYC MC known for works on Fondle 'Em & w/MF Doom deserves much shine Guests MF Doom Mega On & Count Bass D rip and t rout & beats by Metal Fingers [illegible] etc sure as hell make vomp fat on my reality



PACIFICS - THE SEPTEMBER FIRST PROJECT LONG OVEROUE (PROPAGANOA MOVEMENT) CD

Highly anticipated & long overdue debut album from Chicago based hip hop duo the Pacifics Follow up to Especially for New Jabs" Forks produced by KP of Pacifics Legend Martial Scribers Artek and Seattle based Bay Rock Productions



DENIZEN KANE - TREE CITY LEGENDS (GALAPAGOS4) LP/CD

Astounding album from member of Typical Cats & spoken word group I Was Born With Two Tongues incl 1st new Typical Cats track in over a year featuring Qwel & Owazaar Beats by DJ Natural (Typical Cats) Anacron (The Neitherworlds) & KP of The Pacifics



KRISTOFF SALU VS. MORRIS NIGHTINGALE - MY MINES I (MERCK) CD/2x12"

2 aliases of 18 year old Johnny Edgar Kristoff Salu uses hybrid sound tools to emulate hiphop rhythms using random processes Morris Nightingale uses vinyl samples to create an opposing addition Released this month as 2 LTD separate 12 s



OPE - BOOLEAN LOGIC (THEAGRICULTURE) CD/2 X 12"

Beat patterns soundscapes hooks & genuine down home audio cooking make up the deep bliss abstract hip hop of Quiet Personal Electronics Also available as seperate 12"s

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EXPRESS RISING
SOMEBODY'S BIRTHDAY/CLUMSY OWL
MEMPHIX 8006 45 7"

No kazooties on this instrumental by Chicago producer/funk historian Dante Carfagna, who also co-produced Professor Griff records for Luke Skywalker back in the early 90s. "Somebody's Birthday" pops an inflatable cake doll with a needle and watches it fly all over the room. This is less birthday and more like its memory, both fond and wan. The Fender Rhodes develops an old curled photo of the party that must have been found in the attic next to the box of records. Across the room are the drums, hanging hi on the hat rack and kicking trick candle sparks. "Clumsy Owl" crashes the party with some uptempo manmba and a pre-Dre synth yet to touch down — much cooler than Bubo, that bumbling buster owl from *Clash Of The Titans*

JIMI HENTLEY SOUND
APACHE/CHARLIE'S THEME
ESPIONAGE DISK SEP001 7"

Just what we need: another version of "Apache", a B-boy anthem as overcooked as rawhide spaghetti. But this version is funky surf noir, playing hackey sack for Wyatt Earp's scalp. Dubious legend puts Hentley in the late 60s, recording out on his farm a few miles down from Zechariah Whateley's old place. The Incredible Bongos have been abducted, tied up and tossed in the trunk by a fat fingered organ and driven to a lonely shed by Orca wah wah and drums with reverb on their breath. "Charlie's Theme" is for the ride back, the road being slower and starker now, as if Poets Of Rhythm made a track for Beth Gibbons' "Extremely rare" it sez here, and pressed on vinyl pinker than Caladryl lotion, so jump on it

HUG
F*KIN WIT HUG/REBEL RADIO
OLD MAID ENTERTAINMENT PROMO 12"

Even if Huggy Bear sounds like an Eminem without crossover appeal (right down to trying to slip his girl a Roophy and the *"jiggy jiggy jiggy"* bit in the background), I'm a sucker for this record because a) I'm the world's biggest Antonio Fargas fan, and b) the production is some of the best in that growing trend for *Fiddler On The Roof* beats encroaching on HipHop. You probably won't hear "F*kin Wit Hug" at your cousin's bar mitzvah, but zingers like *"That's more beats per minute than Dominican reggae"* means a career in the Borscht Belt awaits. *(Peter Shapiro)*

MOTION MAN
CLEARING THE FIELD
THRESHOLD PROMO CD

Motion Man used to rap backwards and, along with Kool Keith, came up with one of the best hooks of the later 90s: *"We look out* windows and *stairs/We fly the planes ourselves"*. He sounds like Sadat X with a mucilage problem, perpetually on the brink of dislodging an oyster. Having produced good independent rap since 1989 (and keeping Kool Keith crossdressed in nice beats in the late 90s), board minder Kut Masta Kurt's always been underrated, chopping to his own drummer when DJ Premier groupies stalled indie rap. What it lacks in titles ("Straight Flowin' On 'Em" and "Side Ta Side"), Motion compensates with absurd flow. On "Cleaning The Field", stabs play kick the can and Motion plays the meanest Oakland Raider ever: *"Zone blitz bullet head Jack Tatum smack on/Separate the mic from the man/That's my job/He paralyzed because my beatmaker threw a lob pass"*. Vallejo's E-40 is one of rap's only self-made glottologists, and on "Reason 2 Panic" he promises to leave the vocal booth haunted. "Come On Y'all" finds Motion ripping up Tuff Crew's 1989 Philadelphia monument, "My Part Of Town Remix". It includes "Apache" (yet again) for the bridge and a Kool G Rap bite for the lisp. And the skits are really funny

RICOCHET KLASHNEKOFF
DAGGO MENTALITY
YNR YNR009 12"

The name of this Hackney wordsmith may sound like one of those wretched sub-Primal Scream Techno-rock groups, but rest assured this is some of the better British HipHop around. Mr Klashnekoff's words don't exactly bounce around the soundfield like Ricochet Rabbit (even if he does rhyme *"Nigenan Guinesses"* with *"lyricists"*), but this gets over thanks to the production from Lewis Parker and L Dolo which neatly blends New York, Kingston and London. *(Peter Shapiro)*

THE ROOTS
THOUGHT AT WORK
WHITE LABEL 12"

Just what we need: another song sampling "Apache", this one a fierce remake of the Kool G Rap classic "Men At Work". Different lyrics, same sentiment: 'wear a salad bar's worth of spit-shield when I rap'. On their last album, The Roots honoured Schoolly D's "Saturday Night", on "Thought At Work" a piano on the run pulls a Tommy gun from its violin case (or maybe it's just "Hey Bulldog" by The Beatles) and Black Thought raps through a distortion amp, obeying the Juice Crew's lo-fi law and breaking his pool stick into shards of shit-talk

SCIENZ OF LIFE
PROJECT OVERGROUND: THE SCIENZ EXPERIMENT
SUB VERSE SVM22 CD

Atlanta, Georgia's Scienz Of Life's second album finds that the trio of ID 4Windz, Lil Sci and Inspektor Willabee are still *"black music fiend alcoholics"*, stroking *"chords like Thelonious to get atonement"* and offer their listeners generous amounts of *"organic HipHop"*. Much of the group's appeal lies in their lyrics, which are full of the vivid imagery and circuitous logic inspired by a life spent in freestyle ciphers. The beats are better and more consistent than the first album, although the *"bass-drum-keyboards"* equation once avowed by Wu-Tang Clan's Genius still holds considerable sway. Also present are frequent complaints of how *"you all slept on Scienz Of Life and you ain't awakened"*, though they don't suggest any solutions to this problem other than to *"buy the album"*. A less charitable listener might complain that too much time is spent bemoaning the lack of *"original rap"* songs, pining for a HipHop golden age that never existed. Scienz Of Life can be thrilling, but they aren't exactly innovative. *(Mosi Reeves)*

STEINSKI
NOTHING TO FEAR
BOOTLEG CD

When Steve Stein was attending New Hampshire's Franconia College, students, faculty and players enjoyed their homecoming soccer game on acid. Although Steinski went on to graduate as the man Most Unlikely To Make A Record That Will Change HipHop, producers today are still sniffing the paste of his and Douglas 'Oouble Dee' DiFranco's archetype "Lesson" series. Calling it a "collection of short stories", Steinski closes this Nothing To Fear mix with an "Acid Test" — a woman explaining, *"As soon as she made her peace with the radio, the interference began"*. Steinski mixes and meddles with it all: from Three Times Oope to James Mason's perverted Humbert echo. Another spoken (yelled) word piece warns, "Your head is gonna roll", and right on time, the conga rolls from West End's monstrous "B Beat Classic" bounce across the track. A good executioner is never late. Next, CK Mann's "Funky Highlife" makes drums from thunderbolts as a Nigenan chant breaks down in joy, finally getting the extended edit it's been begging for. Then a 50s Broadway barbershop quartet chugs, *"CASH for the noggins and the pickins and the frippins!"* Followed at the same pace by J Live's "Them That's Not". And though Nelly's new single sucks, it's good of Stein to plug in his own spoken weed paraphernalia and make a dub version of the classic "Country Grammar". Originally intended for Coldcut's *Solid Steel* radio show, this is an, ahem, unofficial release (although a industry-bowdlerised version is slated to come out on Ninja Tune next year). There's nothing to fear but clearance itself

VARIOUS
DOCUMENTA 3.0
AGENDA AGN003 CD

VARIOUS
DOCUMENTA 3.1
AGENDA AGN004 CD

Agenda's *Documenta* series shouldn't be confused with Kassel's contemporary art festival, although it does attempt to do a similar job by surveying the various strands of the esoteric electronic underground. Both *Documenta 3.0* and *3.1* cover 'undie' HipHop, with contributions from crews like Anticon (Them, Deep Puddle Dynamics, etc), Def Jux (Cannibal Ox, Aesop Rock), Ozone (Sonic Sum), Anti-Pop, Galapagos4 (Off Whyte, Centric L), Celestial Recordings (Daddy Kev), Low Pressure (Josh Martinez) and Peanuts & Corn (John Smith). There are no surprises here, and if you're in any way invested in the scene you've probably heard all of the tracks before, but as a neat summation of DIY HipHop, it's tough to beat. *(Peter Shapiro)* □

Jazz & Improv

Reviewed by Julian Cowley

DE AMSTERDAM KLEZMER BAND
LIMONCHIKI
KNITTING FACTORY WORKS KFW300 CD

The conventions of klezmer have been subjected to some inspired transformations in recent years. This Dutch septet are relatively modest in their aspirations, mixing traditional songs with new ones, bending the contours rather than breaking the frame. Emphasis falls heavily on fun with accordion furiously pumping out goodwill and clarinet characteristically caught between a tear and a guffaw. The added ingredient that injects satisfying oddness into *Limonchiki* is a taste for ska rhythms that chug in almost surreptitiously then declare their presence with a grin. And flashes of quirky klezmer rap add a tang to otherwise routine vocals.

JOHN BUTCHER & PHIL MINTON
APPLES OF GOMORRAH
GROB 429 CD

A characterful vocalist in more restricting jazz contexts, Minton really thrives on the expressive latitude of free improvising, and his inventiveness has rarely found more fertile ground than in this wonderful coupling with John Butcher's deconstructions of saxophone vocabulary. Each of the 17 tracks, the fruit of three separate encounters in 1999, displays the duo's fabulous reciprocity; the twin voices entwine for strength and send out a wild variety of strange shoots.

COXHILL/FELL/HASLAM/ HESSION/RUTHERFORD
TERMITE ONE
BRUCE'S FINGERS BF32 CD

As Simon Fell moves compositionally onward and outward, it's invigorating to hear him stretched as a bassist in this tumultuous tussle recorded on a Walkman at the Termite Club in Leeds in 1989. George Haslam's baritone sounds wonderfully surly on this occasion, with Paul Rutherford's trombone adding muscle as well as his usual unexpected twists and turns. Lol Coxhill's soprano weaves snarling through the brawl. The redoubtable Paul Hession wades in from his kit and Fell shows what stern stuff he's made of.

THE ELECTRICS
CHAIN OF ACCIDENTS
AYLER 035 CD

LINES
IN AUSTRALIA
EMANEM 4075 CD

Axel Dörner may be ubiquitous these days, but there's no danger yet of this exciting trumpeter running short of meaningful things to say. Varied company helps. *Chain Of Accidents*, recorded in April 2001, finds him in concert in Copenhagen with Sture Ericson on reeds, percussionist Raymond Strid and bassist Ingebright Håker Flaten. The Electrics shift smoothly across adjacent genres, edging over from free jazz simmer to intricate small sound mosaics. They vary pace and dynamics expertly, and the energy flow is unaffected by their collective descent to the molecular level of buzz, tap, purr and whirr. It's a total music conception fully realised by highly skilled players who impose no limits on their instruments.

In February 2000, Dörner relocated to a studio in Sydney, with Lines, a group that had initially coalesced in London when German percussionist Martin Blume and Australian saxophonist Jim Denley got together with bassist Marcio Mattos and violinist Philipp Wachsmann. Denley plays wispy flute as well as alto, the wonderfully subtle string players tactfully splice in electronics; Blume listens with intensity and punctuates decisively; Dörner conjures dream sounds from his instrument and places them perfectly. *In Australia* documents an extremely rare evening where the level of interaction earns the right to use that overused Improv adjective, 'organic'.

MO FOSTER
TIME TO THINK
PRIMROSE HILL PHR001 CD

Foster is a seasoned session player and author of *17 Watts?*, an anecdotal history of British rock guitar in its pioneering years. Listeners with long memories may recall his work with singer Linda Hoyle in the late 1960s jazz-rock group Affinity. *Time To Think*, recorded in 1999 in an Oxford church, is a relaxed outing guaranteed to soothe anyone amenable to soothing. Foster's compositions lend themselves to pastoral treatment, which somehow sounds pejorative, but the presence of Ray Russell on acoustic guitar, Iain Ballamy on soprano saxophone and Frank Ricotti on vibes means there's a sheen on those gentle sounds.

CHARLES GAYLE
JAZZ SOLO PIANO
KNITTING FACTORY WORKS KFW288 CD

In 2001 saxophonist Charles Gayle returned to his first instrument and recorded this solo piano tribute to the music he heard while growing up. The opener "1939" acknowledges the year of his birth. Further evocative originals follow, together with readings of standards including "Round Midnite", "Body & Soul", "Cherokee" and "Softly As In A Morning Sunrise". Undeniably, Gayle nodding respectfully towards Art Tatum's torrential majesty or Monk's glorious games with Father Time is no match for the imperative figure grasping that tenor. It is revealing, however, as an act of looking back creatively to formative years.

HANS KOLLER JAZZ ENSEMBLE
NEW MEMORIES
33 JAZZ 070 CD

Not the venerable saxophonist but a young pianist and composer. Hans Koller receives enthusiastic endorsement from Mike Gibbs, convener of Big Music and The Only Chrome Waterfall Orchestra. *New Memories* certainly shows adept and fresh use of big band resources, combining compositional directness with an arranger's skill that draws audibly on Gil Evans's example. A 15 piece ensemble featuring trumpet veteran Henry Lowther gives vibrant readings of Koller's scores, and as Gibbs notes, the music has liquidity as well as density. Financial constraints stifle most projects of this kind. Support from Birmingham Jazz helped put this one together, and hopefully there'll be further opportunities to confirm that ensemble writing is Koller's real niche.

NADELÖHR
MERRY MELODIES
UNIT UTR4136 CD

Evan Parker was an early advocate of serious listening to cartoon soundtracks. John Zorn fed patterns of cartoon movement, rapid shifts of mood and pace, exaggerated gestures and brash non sequiturs into his own feverish musical mix. The German quartet Nadelohr do the same, only differently and with frequently startling results that mark this out as personal terrain rather than straightforward borrowing of a sound idea. *Merry Melodies* is not facile pastiche but a brilliantly executed appropriation of filmic techniques for making seriously good music. Violin, sax, keyboards and percussion churn in a kaleidoscopic whirl crammed with allusions but it remains sufficiently open to accommodate vivid and imaginative improvising.

JOSCHA OETZ
VIELES IST EINS
ACCRETIONS 026 CD

In the group Permanent Flow, bassist Oetz plays with trumpeter Rajesh Mehta, drummer Steve Noble and saxophonist Andreas Wagner. A duet with Wagner on tenor, taken from a Cologne performance by that quartet, is included in this showcase for Oetz's solo and duo playing. Nine other tracks were recorded in California, where he now lives. It features three solos, four duets with bass maestro Barre Phillips and one with percussionist Greg Stuart. Oetz is not a dry technician but a flexible and expressive player questing for eloquence. Needless to say, Phillips delivers a series of object lessons and Oetz is primed to respond in kind.

WILLIAM PARKER TRIO
... AND WILLIAM DANCED
AYLER 044 CD

There's a certain grandeur and gravity to the music of bassist William Parker and drummer Hamid Drake, even when dancing is on the agenda. Swedish saxophonist Anders Gahnold withdrew from public view for a lengthy period following the death of Johnny Dyani, his longterm bass foil, but his rough-edged alto sounds perfectly at home framed by these two giants with a huge spring in their shared step. Gahnold, splendidly economical and fiery when occasion demands, sets in motion reeling, teetering melodic lines that are glossed and extended expertly by Parker and Drake. Weight and elasticity in even measure make for some seriously ebullient, high calibre improvising.

THE REMOTE VIEWERS
THE MINIMUM PROGRAMME OF HUMANITY
LEO LR342 CD

Bertolt Brecht supplied the words; David Petts wrote the music and plays tenor and electronics, Adrian Northover plays soprano, Louise Petts plays alto, electronics and sings. The opening track emerges from the shadow of Henry Cow's *Western Culture* album, but Petts' taste for edgy intervals is subsequently fed from more abstract sources. Horns and electronic bubble and wash lock together neatly. Petts' voice fits the avant garde cabaret bill nicely, without overt quirkiness. It's all a bit airless, though. Anyone remember Maggie Nicols's fine first album with Ulrich Lask? Plenty of fresh air there.

JENNY SCHEINMAN
THE RABBI'S LOVER
TZADIK TZ7165 CD

Scheinman grew up in California but the resilience and fire of her violin playing are well-suited to the urgency of New York, where she now resides. *The Rabbi's Lover* reworks traditional Jewish material along with new compositions, addressing radically emotive issues with great dignity. A tough beauty characterises her melodies and their performance, tenderness sublimated into defiance. Scheinman has worked with guitarist Bill Frisell, and there are shades of Frisell in Adam Levy's playing here. The quintet, with Russ Johnson's bright, unflinching trumpet, Greg Cohen's strong bass (replaced on two tracks by Trevor Dunn) and Kenny Wollesen's steering drums, makes proud and lovely music.

WATTS & WESTON
6 DIALOGUES
EMANEM 4069 CD

Active now for more than 40 years, saxophonist Trevor Watts has carved out a multifaceted niche, assuming prominent roles with Spontaneous Music Ensemble, Amalgam, Moiré Music and, more recently, The Celebration Orchestra. His music opens out on more than one front, embracing global sounds as well as jazz and free blowing. Arguably, he's been undervalued as a consequence. Pianist Veryan Weston is an impressive, idiosyncratic performer whose decidedly unlocked hands have goaded Lol Coxhill's soprano and Phil Minton's voice to some of their finest moments on record. On these six pieces Weston simultaneously supports and tests Watts, who responds with the kind of hardwon authority that arises only from the exercise of disciplined curiosity.

CARLOS ZINGARO
CAGE OF SAND
SIRR 2007 CD

Portuguese violinist Zingaro, a regular collaborator with bassist Joëlle Léandre, works solo magic here with his real time blending of violin and electronics. He projects spectral streams of glass harmonica, dips minimalist slabs into corrosive solutions so they glow and effervesce, and mimics the meanderings of animated speech patterns. The bow glides then sputters, strings whimper, pop and soar, shortwave agitation contaminates celestial shimmers, whale cries filter through an underwater cathedral. On *Cage Of Sand*, an experienced improvisor's extreme versatility, steeped in electroacoustic know-how, opens up charmed spaces. □

Modern Composition

Reviewed by Andy Hamilton

ANTOINE BEUGER
CALME ÉTENDUE (SPINOZA)
EDITION WANDELWEISER EWR0107 CD

"In my attempt to approach Spinoza's *Ethics* musically, my first step was to copy out all the monosyllabic words of this book in the order of their appearance" a total of about 40,000 words... In performing *Calme Etendue*, the words are spoken in a very relaxed tempo (one word every eight seconds) and with a very quiet voice." Beuger's 1997 recitation at the Museum in Leverkusen lasted 180 hours, spread over 26 days; the disc extracts 70 minutes. Listeners can gear themselves up before the first word is spoken – the recording begins with nine minutes of silence, which then alternates with spoken sections. But since the best words in this 17th century philosophical classic – words like "immanent" – are the longer ones, maybe Beuger understands less than he imagines. A bizarre classic from Edition Wandelweiser.

HARRISON BIRTWISTLE
THE WOMAN AND THE HARE
BLACK BOX BBM1046 CD

This features mostly recent work by Britain's leading modernist, performed by The Nash Ensemble with soprano Claron McFadden. *The Woman And The Hare*, for soprano and reciter with small ensemble, sets a text by David Harsent, librettist for Birtwistle's masterwork *Gawain*, with mythic power on a smaller scale. The beautifully spare *Nine Settings Of Lonne Niedecker*, with only cello accompaniment, features the haunting yet brief lyrical evocations of a 20th century successor to Emily Dickinson. Just as remarkable are the duos for flutes, *Duets For Storab*, in which Birtwistle creates a striking variety of moods from simple resources. The disc closes with the 60s classic *Entr'actes And Sappho Fragments*.

MARCO CAPPELLI
YUN MU
TEATRO DEL SOLE TDS012007 CD

I'd go with Marc Ribot's verdict that "Cappelli labours mightily and successfully to drag the classical guitar into the 21st century". Cappelli begins with studies from John Zorn's *Book Of Heads* from 1978, dedicated to Eugene Chadbourne and in familiar cartoon, jumpcut, scratch 'n' sniff style. Steve Reich's *Electric Counterpoint* from 1967 is performed on classical guitar with the tape part featuring stringed instruments from folk traditions, producing a bright, jangling interpretation of the minimalist classic. Others featured in a very satisfying programme are Claudio Lugo, Junghae Lee and Giorgio Tedde.

GLORIA COATES
STRING QUARTETS 1, 5 AND 6
NAXOS 8559091 CD

From her student days in the 60s, American composer Glona Coates was interested in glissandos – the gradual rise and fall in pitch with no distinct stopping points that's easiest to achieve on strings. Since her move to Europe in 1969, her style has become unique and uncategorisable. These string quartets show a fascination with many aspects of precisely notated vagueness and blurring, with the occasional well-known melody hidden in a Doppler effect of receding and approaching sound. There's a remote connection with the 60s texture music of Penderecki and Ligeti, but Coates's soundworld is so alien it seems crazed and fractured. The first movement of *Quartet No 5* from 1988 is a canon, but with first violin and viola tuned a quarter tone higher than second violin and cello, producing an eerie and unsettling effect. The final movement, entirely in glissandos, is so vertiginous it induces feelings of nausea in this viscerally compelling interpretation by The Kreutzer Quartet.

DELTA SAXOPHONE QUARTET
FACING DEATH
FMR 104C0502 CD

The World Saxophone Quartet have a lot to answer for. This British foursome open with *Stub* by Graham Fitkin, and close with Joe Duddell's idiotically hectic, unintentionally comic *Circle Square*. At least there are two pieces of substance in between. Louis Andriessen's *Facing Death* originally translated Charlie Parker's lines into an unlikely string quartet medium, here, though, there's the familiar problem of classical saxophonists trying to sound jazzy. Chris Fox's *Concurrent Air* turns out, improbably, to be based on "Londonderry Air" ("Danny Boy"). It might be superficially euphonious, but there's little familiar to latch onto, furthering his reputation for writing some of the most inscrutable music around.

TOM HEASLEY
ON THE SENSATIONS OF TONE
INNOVA 566 CD

Hermann Helmholtz's classic 1863 exposition of the science of acoustics inspired Harry Partch, Charlemagne Palestine and now Tom Heasley's Ambient compositions. Heasley is credited with tuba, throat singing, loops and digital processing, and the results are at the experimental rather than New Age end of Ambient. The floating masses of sound are euphonious but with enough edge not to be enervating.

HOSOKAWA/BACH/YUN
IMAGES, WINTER BIRD, GASA AND OTHER PIECES
ECM NEW SERIES 1782/3(461662) 2XCD

Cellist Thomas Demenga concludes his project of placing Bach's *Cello Suites* alongside contemporary music, this being World Cup year, *Suites 5* and *6* appear with pieces by Japanese composer Toshio Hosokawa and the Korean Isang Yun. Yun left to study in Germany in 1956 and left only once, when he was abducted to Seoul by the Korean secret service, tortured and released after two years. Toru Takemitsu is the best known Far Eastern composer who took up a European idiom and confronted the resulting conflict of identity, but Yun, who remained more of a modernist if not an avant gardist, is the more profound composer, as shown here in the highly expressive *Images* for flute, oboe, violin and cello. Hosokawa travelled to Berlin to study with Yun, and also investigated gagaku music. Like Yun, he shows an abiding concern with the single pitch as musical event. *In Die Tiefe Der Zeit* (*Into The Depths Of Time*) pairs Demenga with accordion maestro Teodoro Anzellotti in a dark piece where the two instrumental sounds become intertwined.

JAMES MACMILLAN
CHAMBER MUSIC
BIS 1269 CD

The first recordings of the Scottish composer's two string quartets appear with one of his best known creations, *Tuireadh* (*Lament*), for clarinet and string quartet from 1991, a response to the Piper Alpha North Sea oil rig disaster. Its keening, sobbing grief and anger show MacMillan's powerful writing at its most tightly wrought and inspired. The Emperor String Quartet, with wonderful clarinet playing by Robert Plane, produce acerbic, focused performances.

OLGA NEUWIRTH
VAMPYROTHEONE
KAIROS 0012242KAI CD

Neuwirth pursues a "tense, darkish, nervous" music looking outside the world of contemporary composition, which she loves but finds "conservative and petrified". In these performances by the peerless Klangforum Wien, the dramatically charged *Vampyrotheone* draws on alienated modes of playing explored by Helmut Lachenmann, with three ensemble formations led by electric guitar (Burkhard Stangl), bass clarinet and baritone sax. *Bählamms Fest* is music drama from which she has extracted three "instrumental islands" for ensemble and live electronics. Her Kairos output marks Neuwirth's transition from promising newcomer to established master.

LUIGI NONO/JÜRG FREY
OHNE TITEL/"HAY QUE CAMINAR" SOGNANDO
EDITION WANDELWEISER EWR0103 CD

LA LONTANANZA NOSTALGICA UTOPICA FUTURA
EDITION WANDELWEISER EWR0102 CD

CHORAL WORKS
HANSSLER CLASSIC 93022 CD

In the decade before his death in 1990, Luigi Nono turned introspective with a style of still, rapt meditation that at times hinted at lyricism. His last work, *"Hay Que Caminar"* Sognando, for two violins, brings that style to perfection, with slow, tremulous echoes of melody, like a distant radio signal coming in and out of focus. The recital by Clemens Merkel and Joanna Becker begins with *Ohne Titel* by Jürg Frey, the two violinists play the same part, but complete unison is an unattainable ideal. The po-faced inanity of Beuger's Spinoza tribute from the same label rubs off on the sleevenote: "Where many composers might begin with the idea for one thing or many things, I imagine Frey as starting always with two things: this and that...". But the scraps of melody culminate finally in a haunting, obsessive minimalist motif.

On La Lontananza... (*The Nostalgic, Utopian Future Distance*) from 1988-89, Merkel is partnered by eight track tape. Tape sounds are often grindingly industrial, with Nono working at the tail end of an inflexible technology, arguably to less satisfying effect. The choral disc features *Da Un Diario Italiano* from 1964, for massive 72 part choir of solo voices, setting statements by factory workers – all that remains of a music theatre piece whose scale and complexity defeated Nono. *Das Atmende Klarsein* is again from the his final period, with small choir, bass flute and live electronics.

RONDELLUS
SABBATUM
BEG THE BUG 211200002 CD

The practitioners of the great Estonian choral tradition fought a guerrilla culture war against the Soviet state for the better part of a century for this? If you haven't already guessed from the title, this album from the bright, new, Eurovision-hosting Tallinn is a collection of Black Sabbath songs done in medieval style, complete with frame drums, fiddles and positive organs. Oh, did I mention that the lyrics have been translated into Latin – which explains why there's no "Iron Man" or "Sweet Leaf" here, although it would have been great to hear "Folium Dulcis" kicking off with a Gregorian version of that infamous looped cough. Instead, we are presented with ludicrously straight readings of "Verres Militares" ("War Pigs"), "Post Aeternitatem" ("After Forever") and "Rotae Confusionis" ("Wheels Of Confusion"). Still, it's probably better than a Medieval Babes record. *(Peter Shapiro)*

KAIJA SAARIAHO
GRAAL THEÂTRE
ONDINE ODE997 CD

The Finnish composer is known for her felicitous combinations of acoustic ensembles and electronic music, and the pioneering *Lichtbogen* from 1986, for nine musicians and live electronics, is music of utmost refinement, the dazzling, iridescent *Solar*, for chamber ensemble, is less well known. Coming after the divide between early and later styles discussed in last year's Saariaho feature (*The Wire* 213), the recent *Graal Théâtre* has previously been released on Sony, but it appears here in a version for violin and chamber ensemble. The performances by the Finnish chamber ensemble Avanti are compelling throughout.

DIDERIK WAGENAAR
METRUM
COMPOSERS' VOICE PORTRAIT CV94 CD

The UK ensemble Icebreaker was formed in 1989 to play Dutch repertoire which was then little known in Britain, including Louis Andriessen. Their earliest concerts featured Didenk Wagenaar's *Tam Tam*, composed 1978-9 and dedicated to Andriessen, here it's included with more recent pieces. This is hectic, zany, bewilderingly eventful music indebted to Nancarrow's polymetric auditory illusion and to medieval hocketing, a kind of counterpoint with the melodic line passed round different instruments. Dense voicings, with unisons of electronic and acoustic instruments, have a relentless power, edgy and unsettling.

Outer Limits

Reviewed by Jim Haynes

BEEQUEEN
OWNLINESS
INFRACTION INFX003 CD

Beequeen is perhaps the longest running project by the ever prolific Frans De Waard and Freek Kinkelaar. The two met out of their mutual adoration for the undersung cult group Legendary Pink Dots a little more than a decade ago, and residues of the Pink Dots' miasmic, Goth-inflected psychedelia have continually lingered amidst the Beequeen albums, even if the duo have never risked emulating Edward Ka-Spel's lispy peculiarities. That said, *Ownliness* mutes those Pink Dots references into a magical ambience that undergirds spartan arrangements for hushed acoustic guitar chords and sustained organs. Beequeen's affiliation with post-Industrial agendas are underplayed in favour of liberally borrowing moves from the current bastions of indie rock: slide guitar motifs from Godspeed You Black Emperor!, tattered cello flourishes from Dirty Three, the wintry earnestness of Low or Sonna, and maybe even the breathy instrumentals of Vincent Gallo. Quite pleasant.

M BEHRENS
ARCHITECTURAL COMMENTARIES
CMR CMR2 CD

For more than a decade now, M Behrens has been translating the textural fluidity of environmental sounds into clinical electroacoustic compositions that often refer to architectural space. *Architectural Commentaries* fits comfortably within Behrens's impressive catalogue, offering a whirlwind tour through a structurally complex but certainly virtual space. Behrens's investigations centre on how the grey ambient washes from cooling and heating mechanisms change when resonating with different rooms. His detached objectivity over his subject matter keeps the furnace pipes, air conditioning ducts and radiators from becoming a replica of the Lynch/Splet *Eraserhead* soundtrack. Even when Behrens actively scrapes his contact microphones across the smooth metal of those ducts, this album never sounds creepy, rather it retains the frosty, depersonalised facade that comes across in The Hafler Trio and Francisco López. Behrens rounds out the album with an incredibly quiet piece of musique concrète previously released on RLW's massive *Tulpas* five CD set.

HEIMIR BJÖRGÚLFSSON & JONAS OHLSSON
UNSPOKEN WORD TOUR
STAALPLAAT BROMBRON04 CD

THE VACUUM BOYS
SONGS FROM THE SEA OF LOVE
FIRE INC F24 CD

Heimir Björgúlfsson has recently announced his official departure from Stilluppsteypa, the obscurantist electronica ensemble he founded in Iceland almost ten years ago, to pursue other collaborations in tandem with his blossoming career on the European gallery circuit. Commissioned by Extrapool and Staalplaat for their Brombron series, *Unspoken Word Tour* is a collaboration between Björgúlfsson and Swedish artist Jonas Ohlsson, whose wilfully sloppy installations are punk orgies of consumerist excess, unpolished Arte Povera and a post-ironic sentiment that's so fashionable in gallery circles these days. As has been the case for the other Brombron collaborations (Main/Antenna Farm and Ehlers/Mathieu), the two artists were given one week in a well equipped studio to produce an album. The results of this condensed session amount to a strangulation of motonk Techno, at times tweaked into ill-tempered duck calls and others erupting like the classic Sahko/Plastikman sound with frigid shards of electricity cascading down upon taut kickdrum rhythms.

The Vacuum Boys are another Björgulfsson collaboration – this time with Guy Amitai, Dan Armstrong and Gert Jan Prins. Together, they offer a humorous take on that old TV staple: an (insert everyday occupation here) who solves crimes. The Vacuum Boys are a wholesome rock 'n' roll group that runs a detective agency, always heading for wacky adventures during their crime solving. Or so says the cleverly written piece of pulp fiction housed within the equally clever packaging to *Songs From The Sea Of Love*. The quartet splurges not on 60s jangle pop, ice cream or haunted houses, but on overloaded digital synthesis loosely structured around repetitive glitches and cheap drum machine rhythms. While The Vacuum Boys offer some polite renditions of the Mego/Ritornell aesthetic, their best moments point back to the mongrel noises from Industrial era SPK, especially during the sawblade abrasion on "All It Took Was A Single Spark" and the noirish strut crackling with FM static on "To The Trees".

BORIS
HEAVY ROCKS
QUATTRO/UK OT005 CD

Yeah! *Heavy Rocks* by name, heavy rock by nature. The title pretty much sums it all up. Each recording from these Tokyo Mogadon rockers has showcased different facets of their Doom Metal prowess, from the epic drone Metal slab of *Absolutego* to the pharmacologically laced riffage on *Amplifier Worship*. They have also participated in adventurous, not to mention vertiginous collaborations with Keiji Haino and Merzbow. *Heavy Rocks* is Bons's high octane stoner rock album, which draws heavily from the dopamine sludge of Electric Wizard, the sunburnt guitar flourishes of Kyuss and the godhead of all Metal, Black Sabbath. All the vocals are belted out in Japanese, yet Bons constantly punctuate their massive, down-tuned, metallic crunch with the universal rock exclamation *"YEAH!"* – often rhyme-ending lines with *"YEAH!"* and *"YEAH!"* which certainly saves a few yen on a rhyming dictionary. But hey, Bons never claimed this was rocket science. Regardless, they do it much better than the majority of the sub-par stoner rock coming out of the States these days. *Heavy Rocks* is dumb, it's crushing, and it's a hell of a lot of fun.

FURSAXA
FURSAXA
ECSTATIC PEACE NO NUMBER LP

Tara Burke has earned major endorsements from Makoto Kawabata and Thurston Moore, who have been so impressed by this Philadelphian psych-out maven as to release a couple of recordings of her Fursaxa project on their respective labels. Following the *Mandrake* CD-R on Kawabata's tiny imprint, this self-titled album published by Moore's Ecstatic Peace is an exceptional set of narcoleptic post-VU semi-rock haze. Working with a couple of her former comrades from the underappreciated Siltbreeze group Un, Burke has scored 19 sketches for monochord acoustic guitars, pedal treated Lowry organ and Farfisa loaded within a grainy texture of raw tape hiss and a general disregard for production cleanliness. She channels these stones like a Wiccan earth mother, with sounds emanating like disaffected recollections of various memories and previously hidden histories. She's not so much interested in telling us specific stories as evoking a psychic connectivity towards those past visions, which are beautifully nostalgic yet vaguely haunting. This album's as good as anything from the Jewelled Antler collective, No Neck Blues Band and Jackie O Motherfucker.

K-GROUP/OMIT
STORAGE
FUSETRON NO NUMBER LP

While their individual aesthetic practices are not all that similar, the New Zealand pairing of Clinton Williams (aka Omit) and Paul Toohey (aka K-Group and member of Surface Of The Earth) have found common ground in their sublime sense of dread. The former has specialised in a sci-fi, existential bleakness shrouded in time-delayed tape constructions, homemade electronics and bleary synth sweeps; while the latter's projects are physical assaults of guitar-based electrocution set to a monochromatic crawl speed. On their second collaboration *Storage*, Williams and Toohey manifest an awe-inspiring tribute to the crumbling monumentality of modern endeavours through a massive analogue synth rumble that the duo push through a couple of cranked-up amplifiers. These imposing drones instantly conjure the images of nuclear reactors, giant water turbines and particle accelerators, yet their take on such grand architectural forms is grim, vaguely sinister and wholly uneasy, as if those crucibles of energy were nearing the critical mass that precedes an untimely collapse.

KUWAYAMA-KIJIMA
01.06.16
TRENTE OISEAUX TOC023 CD

Cellist Kiyoharu Kuwayama and violinist Rina Kijima attempt to activate dead architectural spaces and landscapes within their improvisations by performing in spacious warehouses, abandoned buildings and underground passageways. *01.06.16* captures four edits of an extended midnight session of the two performing underneath a highway overpass. Amid the hushed din of whizzing cars, Kuwayama and Kijima twirl through a complex series of interlocking flourishes, shrills and sharpened squeals that plant themselves firmly within the traditions of ECM sponsored composition. Clearly, these guys are impressive improvisors, but it's rare to find moments when they genuinely appear to be responding to the sounds of the freeway instead of merely jamming with each other. During those fleeting instances when they're actively listening to their environment, Kuwayama and Kijima gently mirror the arhythmic flux of the Doppler effect automobile rush with slowly bending notes and mournful screeches. Yet, these moments are too few and far between to justify this style of improvisation with a pre existing aural environment.

BRENDAN WALLS
CASSIA FISTULA
IDEA IDEA2005 CD

A relative newcomer to the blossoming sound art community in Australia, Brendan Walls tinkers with cracked, abused and otherwise damaged electronic equipment to generate thick oscillations of malleable feedback, which in turn get filtered through some basic DSP tricks (timestretching and pitchshifting being the most obvious). At its best, *Cassia Fistula* recalls Rafael Toral's recent work in its explorations of fragile tonalities freefalling like atomised particles, but elements of the opening and closing tracks overstate the digitising of sound. The excessive use of a timestretching filter vibrating into a static moiré pattern simply turns into an immobile weight rather than a tool used to fine tune any particular sound. Strange as it may seem, the tracks in question feature additional edits and mixing from the typically exceptional Oren Ambarchi. Perhaps Ambarchi gave the new kid some bad advice on how to use his laptop.

Z'EV
THE SAPPHIRE NATURE
TZADIK TZ7161 CD

More of a research document than a cultural product, *The Sapphire Nature* offers five of Z'ev's distinct interpretations of the *Sefer Yetzirah* – an ancient kabbalistic text which details the existential, cosmological and elemental attributes of the 22 letters found in the ancient Babylonian alphabet. Within a weighty 54 page PDF file found alongside the musical programme on the CD, he explains that the nature of pre-Christian languages allowed for multiple interpretations of the same text. Thus he proposes his own explanations of the *Sefer Yetzirah*. The first four interpretations are purely text oriented, located within the PDF, and the last is a 59 minute sonic barrage of the kind of clanging metallic action that one has come to expect from the stalwart percussionist. It leaves you with the impression that you need to know Hebrew, Greek, Latin, Coptic, Egyptian hieroglyphics and at least a dozen other ancient languages just to be able to appreciate the truly awesome nature of this translation. But when Z'ev reveals that the musical accompaniment is a montage wholly comprised of samples from two previous albums, the spell is broken □

Print Run

New music books: devoured, dissected, dissed



Portrait of Varèse as a young man

EDGARD VARÈSE
ALAN CLAYSON
SANCTUARY PBK £12 99

BY BEN WATSON

Hitherto a commercial no-go zone, the 20th century classical avant garde is now deemed sexy enough for its most extreme composer to receive popular paperback treatment (other volumes in this series cover Josephine Baker, Serge Gainsbourg and Pink Floyd). Like many of his generation, Alan Clayson first heard of Varèse via namechecks on records by the Mothers Of Invention, and he tops and tails his biography with discussions of Frank Zappa. The book promises much: Varèse, after all, is one of the few classical composers whose music has enough bite and shock to interest those who have experienced the joys of drums and reverberating speaker bins. It would be good to read about Varèse from the rock angle, where writers mix music and sociology with an aplomb lacking in classical biographies, whose worldview tends to be stiflingly middle class.

Clayson's claim to fame is a book about The Beatles in Hamburg, *Backbeat*, which was made into a major film. Perhaps that explains why his prose leaps over documentary niceties for mise-en-scène fantasy, suggesting a film treatment. This is a book about Varèse 'the man', and drags with it all the dubious ideological clobber such a concept will rouse in a family man from Henley-on-Thames. Replete with would-be racy phrases like "the sock smelling frowziness still common to young male student accommodation", Clayson's stabs at vividness provide a stream of jokey-blokey sub-witticisms. The effect is incongruous and distracting. The main points of the story are covered (Fernand Ouellette's classic Varèse biography provided the skeleton bibliography for Clayson's 'research'), but they are drowned in prurient speculation. We're told about Varèse, the good looking conductor, "flooding the libidos of the sillier females in the orchestra". It prompts the retort: "How does Clayson know? Was he there?" He wasn't.

As the book proceeds, it dawns on the reader that Clayson cannot grasp what Varèse was attempting to do, and rather resents this insult to the intelligence. Varèse wasn't a star with a mass following, so Clayson infers that his supporters were "snobs", enduring his "sound pictures of dementia" for a chance to gossip over a glass of white wine. No one with any sympathy for Zappa's take on Varèse wants piety about art music, but Clayson completely misses the point. Zappa used the pop podium to vaunt a galaxy of avant gardists condemned as 'failures' by straight society. He connected their outcast status to his own painful experience of high school. Clayson, in contrast, is acutely embarrassed by lack of success. Anyone who persists in artistic endeavour without economic reward must be a pseud or a degenerate (or both). Wyndham Lewis's satirical boho-baiting worked because it was driven by clear-eyed recognition of aesthetic value. Clayson lacks any such principle. He remains doggedly ambivalent about Varèse's oeuvre, twice referring to it as "the manufacture of funny noises". He mocks Varèse for seeking sponsorship for audio research during the Great Depression, and thus adds his voice to the philistine chorus which condemns advanced art as a luxury, failing to see that Bell Telephone Co's unswerving loyalty to the "value of the investor's dollar" (words from their letter of refusal) was another manifestation of the vicious principle which was causing unemployment and war in the 30s.

In discussing Nazi Germany, Clayson ascends from the mildly irritating to the downright offensive. "Under the Nazis, even Richard Strauss, that most Teutonic of then living composers, had been oppressed by government intervention in artistic matters. Unlike Hindemith – along with Schoenberg and Bartok – he was not, however, willing to let it force him from his home or prevent his music from being heard." The charge that communists and Jews who fled Nazi Germany were "willing" exiles in comparison to those who, like Strauss, bravely soldiered on, is to denigrate the victims of one of history's most monstrous acts of repression. Debunking is a great game when played on the rich and powerful; when it's played on the persecuted and uprooted, it's vile.

There have been two previous biographies. Fernand Ouellette's *Edgard Varèse* (1966) and Louise Varèse's *Varèse: A Looking Glass Diary 1883-1928* (1973). Clayson says the Ouellette isn't worth buying because it's "short on in-depth estimation of motive", but that's actually its strength. Varèse was uncomfortable with the idea of biography, but worked with Ouellette, amassing unpublished writings (including a sketch for his amazing sci-fi opera *L'Astronome*), press cuttings and other materials. After Varèse's death in 1965, Ouellette subtitled the book "a musical biography", but kept it free of the nib-digging bumptiousness that is Clayson's mode of "estimating motive". Clayson remains blithely unaware of the modernist scruple (actually the radically democratic demand that art be an opportunity for objective assessment of the social unconscious, not a vehicle for individual expression and celebrity) that fired Varèse. He is obtuse enough to reproduce two quotes ("Facts about Varèse's life and work are difficult to obtain. He considers interest in them to be a form of necrophilia; he prefers to leave no traces" – John Cage, "I don't think about the composer of pieces I enjoy listening to, I'm only listening to the results" – Frank Zappa) which explain why biographical trivia diminishes the power and potential of his art.

One of the characteristics of dishonest thinking is that it projects its repressed urges on the enemy. The Nazis wanted to rule the world, so they invented a "global Jewish conspiracy". Clayson can only conceive music as a matter of social prestige and individual vanity, and so everything is reduced to his cynical measure. Actually, the life of Varèse is proof that careers and personal advance are *not* the only things that drive a person; but you don't need bodice-ripping yarns and sneers at the avant garde to tell you that, you just need his music. Loud. □

PHOTO: CORBIS

GLOBAL NOISE: RAP AND HIP-HOP OUTSIDE THE USA
TONY MITCHELL (EDITOR)
WESLEYAN UNIVERSITY PRESS PBK $19 95
BY HUA HSU

The most amazing thing about reading *Global Noise* isn't realising how popular HipHop culture has become worldwide, but realising how little has been written about it. This new anthology attempts to reverse this trend, and despite its faults, its mere existence contributes greatly to the scant body of work on international HipHop available in English.

Global Noise is edited by Tony Mitchell, an Australian academic who has written extensively on identity formation and musical subcultures in Europe. His excellent introduction suggests an exciting, untapped culture of play and exchange, vernacular and "indigenous languages" assailing both local political regimes and any lingering American HipHop orthodoxy. He succeeds both in taking chauvinistic American commentators to task and introducing the Cultural Studies idea of the 'glocal' – the interplay of a global formation and the local interpretation of that identity – to studies of HipHop culture. Though Mitchell's aim is true and his intentions commendable, the anthology's submissions leave a little to be desired. Limited by regional academic and journalistic trends and obvious language barriers, the anthology's submissions rarely strays from a European base. Outside of the standard looks at the German, French and UK scenes, there are solid pieces on the history of rap and trends in less-publicised European locales like Bulgaria and Italy. Jacqueline Urla's "We Are All Malcolm X!" is a fascinating look at the intersection of the HipHop diaspora and Basque identity and Ted Swedenburg's chapter on "Islamic HipHop Versus Islamophobia" is as interesting and vital as the title would suggest. Perhaps the reason these overviews stand out is because they each focus on a subjugated group's use of HipHop culture as an alternative political discourse rather than the music's penetration of larger local markets. Both pieces consider language and identity formation as alternative political sites for the subaltern, instead of the more overt methods of protest or activism, they offer compelling pictures of HipHop's politicising effect of articulating Basque and Muslim identity, respectively.

Unfortunately, the anthology lacks cogent and consistent analysis of this politics of identity, and the book's failure to cover HipHop's emergence in Asia and Africa is especially glaring. The race question is rarely addressed adequately by many of the contributors. The collection focuses heavily on HipHop as outlaw culture rather than examining its relationship towards or against the 'blacknuss' and colour of HipHop's founding. Despite commendable chapters on the history of rap in Korea and Japan, the book as a whole rarely gets to the nuanced discussion of how poses and identities change across borders and lands. Joe Wood's piece in *Transition* magazine on Japan's "Yellow Negro" phenomenon of fake tans, subterranean clubs and black servicemen would have been an interesting addition here.

Perhaps the most glaring problem with *Global Noise* is its dry, academic tone. Most of the entries resemble term papers or dissertation chapters; unfortunately, you get the sense that some of the authors see HipHop with a similar rigidity. The musicological lens offers rigour and formula but little room for feeling and pleasure. Rather than acknowledging the dynamism and instability inherent in the form, HipHop gets cast as an interchangeable, plug-in value for 'youthful rebellion' across the globe, a rigid and readymade pose rather than an identity that adjusts and evolves over time and space. HipHop, a culture vibrant with stubborn change, sly shapeshifting and utter contradiction, becomes frozen as Chuck D's "black CNN". In a broader sense, this is 'true' – HipHop offers release and insight where few constructive alternatives exist. But where most of the authors here view 'politics' in strict terms, the possibility for release through dim fantasy, dumb fun or simple wordplay gets shafted. Despite these criticisms, *Global Noise* is still an essential book in the study of HipHop culture. It provides historical data and substance where only conjecture and rumour have previously existed, and its generally optimistic feel about rap across the globe suggests hope at a time when HipHop's Western reality seems tenuous, fragile and dangerously anachronistic. □

RING OF FIRE: THE JOHNNY CASH READER
MICHAEL STREISSGUTH (EDITOR)
DA CAPO PRESS HBK £26
BY BLEDDYN BUTCHER

While it's not entirely useless, this collection neatly demonstrates the limits of the journalistic enterprise. Too many of the pieces included are hagiographic resumés, presenting Johnny Cash's career as a miraculous series of celebrity escapades and oddball alliances. There's precious little by way of analysis and, until the book's fourth quarter, no attempt to account for Cash's enduring, crosscultural appeal. Most of the pieces, drawn from each of his five public decades, are short and ceremonial: they mark some long gone occasion by retelling the story so far and giving it a contemporary gloss. Most are numbingly orthodox. Journalists must, of course, operate within editorial constraints, but, given what Cash has made of his own limitations, this collective failure of nerve – and vision – is ultimately dispiriting.

Fortunately, there are a couple of brave exceptions to this gloomy rule. Reviewing Cash's return to critical favour after teaming up with Rick Rubin for *American Recordings* in 1994, Chris Dickinson – onetime editor of *The Journal Of Country Music*, no less – is initially unconvinced. She denounces "the overt calculation of the album's marketing" for pitching Cash's "frequently flaky" interpretations at hip adherents of "the Appalachian dead-baby school of songwriting". Ouch. She doesn't even like the album's cover photograph in which, she insists, "Cash resembles the kind of pretentious icon Charlton Heston became after he made *The Ten Commandments* and started believing his own myth". You see what she means – whether you want to or not. Luckily, Dickinson's no dogmatist: she puts her fears to the test. Seeing Cash in performance, she is overwhelmed by his "awesome" presence and changes her mind. Indeed, she finds that even "Delia's Gone" – an "Appalachian dead-baby" song par excellence – "rings with the true heaviness missing from his recorded version". Revising her initial estimate, she concludes that Cash has genuine gravitas. Comparisons with Moses are not wholly inappropriate, then.

Nick Tosches goes further yet. In the book's outstanding chapter, "Chordless In Gaza" (written in 1995), he wonders where Cash gets his undoubted authority from. Tosches's investigative method is thrillingly indirect. Consulting Handsome Dick Manitoba – a stylish diversion – he learns that Cash derives his power from "the *physical* sound of his voice. It's like buyin' a book called, like, y'know, America". Tosches makes a wry mental note.

Cash has made similarly grand claims himself. The Man In Black Tosches encounters in the flesh is an itchy autodidact, unimpressed by his late return to favour but still troubled by the death of his brother Jack in 1944. When Cash shyly confesses he's written a novel about Jack's "murder" called *The Hoxie Rock*, Tosches instantly divines its significance. The Hoxie rock is a slab of sandstone that served as a doorstep in Cash's cotton-pickin' childhood homestead in Dyess, Arkansas. It is Cash's Rosetta stone, his Rosebud, symbol of his hardscrabble roots in the Delta – and the directness of his connection to American myth.

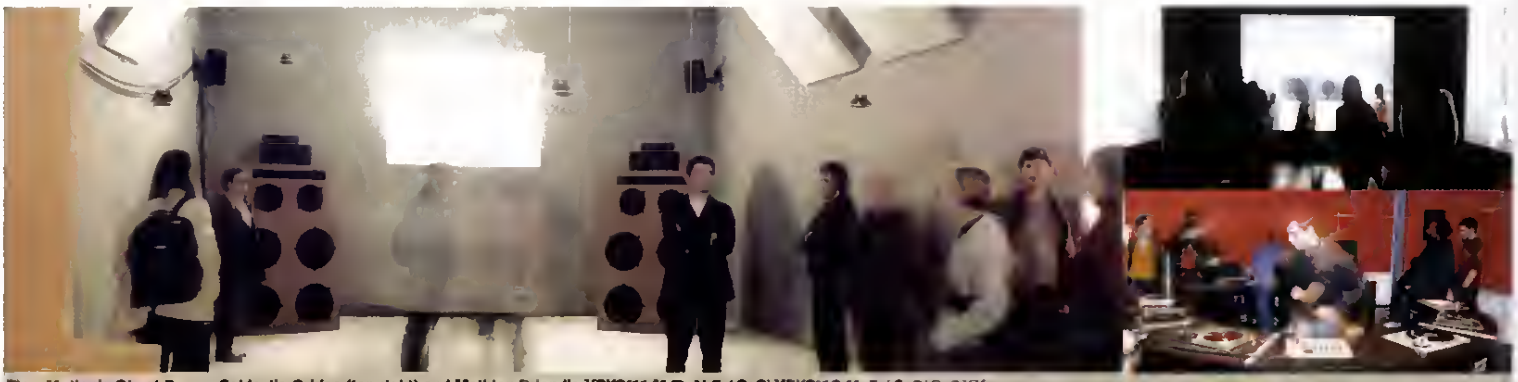
Tosches sees that Cash's sense of the sublime probably comes from much the same source. Leading Cash through yet another recitation of his self-destructive addiction to dexedrine, he elicits a superbly laconic account of his pharmaceutical nadir. In 1967, hopped to the gills and despairing, Cash crawled into Tennessee's Nickajack Caves to die. A mile or so underground his flashlight gave out. As he lay glumly awaiting his own extinction, he felt "a comfortin' presence saying, 'I got things for you to do'." Clutching this tenuous thread, he fought his way through the imponderable darkness and into the light. With experiences like to that to draw on, is it any wonder that Tosches concludes "the obsession with death that runs through much of his work possesses an oddly mystical pulse"?

Cash speaks whereof he knows. His primal instincts connect. In a more adventurous volume, the complexity of that response might have been further explored. With the exceptions noted, Streissguth contents himself with ritual obeisance. □

Cross Platform

Sound in other media

Art and electronic music merge at the Pompidou Centre's Sonic Process exhibition, previewed at this year's Sonar Festival. By Anne Hilde Neset



Flow Motion's *Ghost Dance*, Coldcut's *Gridleo* (top right) and Mathieu Briand's *][SYS*11.MtE>AbE / SoS\][SYS*10.MeE / SoS\BoS][][*

Sonic Process – A New Geography Of Sounds is a major exhibition of new sound art which is hitting two of Europe's most prestigious art centres this year. Currently being premiered at Barcelona's MACBA, and launched in June within the Sonar Festival (see On Location, page B2), the exhibition travels to Paris's Pompidou Centre in the autumn. Pompidou curator Christine Van Assche places the exhibition in a musical rather than a fine art setting: "We have now decided to examine electronic music creation from the past ten years and its relationship with visual arts," she asserts in the catalogue.

Now that electronic tools are integrated into every area of life, it's hard to see why electronic *culture* still wants to claim a privileged position – witness institutions such as the annual Austrian Ars Electronica festival and Canada's Mutek festival for music and technology. Sonic Process limits itself to electronica based artists but takes some adventurous steps – sound art regulars like Carsten Nicolai and Ryoji Ikeda are replaced by less obvious choices such as Flow Motion and Tosca, providing new blood in a sometimes insular scene.

French artist Mathieu Briand's unpronounceable piece *][SYS*11.MtE>AbE / SoS\][SYS*10.MeE / SoS\BoS][][* stands at the gateway to the exhibition. Consisting of five record decks, a mixer, vinyl cutting lathe and 500 blank 12"s, it invites the museum's visitors to mix records together, with the results being etched onto virgin vinyl. These new dubplates are then reinserted into the process and used to produce the next record in the chain. Briand's work spirals on and on, producing one new record each day. But what was the source of all the records? Just an anonymous "loop of electronic sounds", adding to the suspicion that the installation, like its title, is empty of meaning. Recording for recording's sake: great in a bedroom, indulgent in a museum.

Having directed videos for Fatboy Slim, Iggy Pop and µ-Ziq, Californian video artist Doug Aitken has a solid background in the music biz, but his contribution, *new skin*, is not obviously musical in its subject matter. The 15 minute film, projected onto four elliptical screens and a surround sound system, shows a Japanese American woman with a photographic memory: "I store images. I hold on to them, one image, then another, then another". If not exactly an exploration (or indeed "geography") of sound, Aitken's hyper skilled technique makes for a ravishing video work.

Coldcut's interactive piece *Gridlo*, a collaboration with Brighton VJ collective Headspace, is less impressive. A grid of sensors embedded in the floor enable the surrounding three screens to set off audiovisual samples: a cartoon cuckoo clock, news footage of Bush and Blair, graffiti, explosions, all to a soundtrack of Coldcut's familiar phat beat. The experience is like walking through a Burroughsian cut-up vision seen through the eyes of Walt Disney. 12 years after *Fear Of A Black Planet*, their political, sample-infused 'edge' feels outdated and about as inventive as schoolbook media theory.

Next door, London music collective Flow Motion's *Ghost Oance* – a collaboration with *Wire* writer Kodwo Eshun – places four microphones at the cardinal points outside MACBA to broadcast outdoor activity into a dimly-lit space together with a dub infused, prerecorded soundtrack from speakers suspended at different heights from the ceiling. The catalogue states that *Ghost Oance* examines the migration and mutation of Jamaican music in the West, but this theme is too deeply buried in their installation.

American media artist Renée Green's *WaveLinks* provides a much needed investigative interlude. Based on interviews with various musicians, critics, curators and DJs, her suite of themed documentary films are presented on seven TV monitors. Christian Marclay, Elliott Sharp, Hecker, Greg Tate, Ultra-red, Diedrich Diederichsen, Mika Vainio and a slew of others are probed on themes such as *Laptops – Perspectives On Computer Music*, *Activism And Sound*, *The Aural And The Visual*, and, baffilngly, *Meditations On The Wire: Views On The British Music Magazine* (now we know what it's like to be reviewed). Despite rough editing, *WaveLinks* puts some meat on the show, giving a thorough background to some of electronic music's prime points of discussion over the years.

The most ambitious installation in the exhibition is Scanner and Mike Kelley's entrancing ghost hunt. *Spirits From Paris (Pans, Live By Satellite On 14 Channels)* consists of a ring of 12 TV monitors playing footage shot in 'spiritually significant' parts of Pans, surrounding a screen displaying processed images of a dancing crowd. 14 geographical spots, including the studio of spirit photographer Jean Buguet, the house where Jim Morrison died, the tomb of spiritualist guru Allen Kardec and other 'charged' areas, have been filmed and are presented as a fake 'live feed' through the monitors. On the central screen, the uninhibited, libidinous movements of disco dancers bobbing up and down to a soundtrack of Ambient noise made for an eerie atmosphere, as if ghosts were dancing on a grave. The method of recording supernatural sounds by stopping a tape machine and waiting for spirits to imprint themselves on the magnetic tape is appropriated here for video. Employing the Burroughsian method of recording and editing everyday life in order to reveal hidden messages, *Spirits From Paris* asserts the act of recording as an inherently mystical process.

Tosca, aka Austrian duo Richard Dorfmeister and Rupert Huber, have collaborated with Mexican contemporary artist Gabriel Orozco for *Sophiensäle Vienna (May 1999)*. Taking its elements from a Tosca concert in Vienna, the piece consists of a large-screen slideshow: images of travels around China projected with a soundtrack of Tosca's trademark dub-tronica. Essentially a chillout room rather than a piece of art, the space doubled up as an air conditioned refuge from Sonar's heat and pounding beats.

Sub Rosa musician David Shea's contribution, *2001 A Soundfilm in Eight Acts*, is set up in a space resembling a cinema, with a window protecting a synthesizer replacing the movie screen. Pointing out the relationship between sound and image, this non-visual film experience (inducing "the power of visual evocation", in Shea's own words) references films, soundtrack composers and sound engineers, but Shea's soundfilm feels more like a clinical listening lab devoid of the big emotions large screen cinema evokes.

Upsetting art history's sensory hierarchy of eyes over ears, Sonic Process holds a noble torch for music to be considered with equal importance in the arts. It is an important show for forcing the art world to take sound seriously as an artistic (as opposed to simply entertaining) medium. But by focusing only on the last ten years of the fast moving world of electronic music, some of the works on display already seem dated, proving how hard it is to crystallise a moment in this mercurial and elusive realm. □ *Sonic Process – A New Geography Of Sounds is at Barcelona MACBA until 1 September, then shows at Paris Pompidou Centre 26 October-3 January 2003. Website: www.sonic-process.org*





Wireless future: Matt Rogalsky with doppelganger (above), Jonah Brucker-Cohen's *Internet Radio* (right), exhibited at Cybersonica

CYBERSONICA
LONDON ICA
UK

BY LINA DZUVEROVIC RUSSELL

Held in a week when the sound processing software package SuperCollider became freeware (because its programmer accepted a job at Apple), and briefly before online MP3 download heaven Audiogalaxy was forced to bite the dust, the first incarnation of Cybersonica. The International Festival of Music and Sound ended, appropriately enough, by diving into the murky waters of music copyright. "When you buy a CD, you buy the rights to listen to it, not to change it in any way," exclaimed Dr Richard Barbrook with a sarcastic glint in his eye, during a panel discussion he was hosting entitled "Copyright And Commerce". Barbrook was quoting Matt Phillips of the British Phonographic Institute to a bemused audience of sampling fiends, sound artists and generative music heads.

A joint venture by the University of Westminster and CARTE (Centre for Arts Research Technology and Education), Cybersonica – a three day event held at the ICA and satellite venues in London – attracted a solid audience despite the steep £90 entry fee. With its ambitious remit to become London's premier annual festival dedicated to defining the frontiers of electronic audiovisual culture, Cybersonica was packed with installations, concerts, a Symposium, screenings and club nights. With a mix of performances including Pole, DJ Spooky, Nullpointer and Zan Lyons, and an online exhibition of nifty sound toys by the likes of artist/composer/designer Golan Levin, design collective Squidsoup and Net artist Peter Luining, the festival programme spanned a wide spectrum of current digital sound practice.

Plucked straight out of academia, the two day Symposium was heavily grounded in generative music discourse. Fortunately, obsessively techy and academic presentations were regularly interrupted by artist demonstrations and panel discussions which were loosely themed into categories including Sound Art, New Instruments And Interfaces, Live Performance Methods, Interactivity, Audiences, and Copyright And Commerce. There was plenty of innovation in evidence, but the question remained: how much of this work reaches beyond its purely technological achievements?

Demonstrations included 'classics' such as Walter Fabeck's *Chromazone* – a MIDI theremin developed at the STEIM Foundation in Amsterdam. Tom Betts (of the creative Web venture Nullpointer) presented Pixelmap – an application which allows generative music programs (such as Max and PD) to produce simple geometric patterns (think animation classics Norman Mclaren, and Oskar Fischinger). John Eacott and Mark d'Inverno introduced their *Intelligent HiFi (iHiFi)*, a new 'ambient intelligence' system based on recent advances in generative and algorithmic music. Reminiscent of the Muzak Corporation's mission to optimise different environments with music, *iHiFi* aspires to make your domestic appliances talk to your stereo and collectively conspire to create your desired domestic ambiance.

The highlight of the Symposium was Matt Rogalsky's presentation of his Kash software, developed as a response to the unimaginatively named Cash – a commercial software enabling radio stations to trim the silences between words, thus freeing up more time for advertising. Cash was first made famous by American talk show host Rush Limbaugh, who set out on a campaign to fight for his rights as a performing artist, claiming that his on-air personality was the sum total of his words and silences together. Rogalsky's Kash does precisely the opposite of Cash: it *eliminates* words, but preserves the silences, which are revealed as a collection of emotionally charged sounds of human presence such as inhalations, mid-word pauses and the heavy anticipation of words about to be spoken. Rogalsky's project continues into live music: he uses Kash to filter out instrumental sounds, feeding pauses back into the live event in his collaborations with experimental violinist Jane Henry and the Rogalsky Brothers Trio.

Crammed into a small space, Cybersonica's exhibition component seemed hastily put together and under-resourced in comparison with the well organised Symposium: failing to deliver the sophistication the symposium hinted at, the installations confirmed the suspicion that much of this talk sounds better on paper than in practice. If there really is so much groundbreaking audiovisual experimentation out there, then why did so little of it make it into this exhibition? The seven pieces exhibited were a melange of computer based works, an interactive floor piece and sound installations. The work of artist Jonah Brucker-Cohen stood out as the most interesting contribution. His mission is to challenge our relation to conventional Internet interfaces by bringing virtual processes into the real world. His whimsical installations make the technology adapt to human activity (rather than the other way round) through a series of clunky 'real world' objects used to trigger digital processes. In that vein, his installation *Internet Radio*, a collaboration with artist James Tu, consisted of a vintage radio reconfigured to stream online MP3 radio stations. Gallery visitors could make their choice of radio station in the foolproof old-fashioned way – by turning the dial. But instead of tuning into different frequencies, the *Internet Radio* dial presented a choice between genres: House, Techno, rap, jazz, 80s, random, etc – each option giving access to over 100 Net radio streams. Brucker-Cohen's further adventures into networking everyday objects includes his project *Search Engine* (presented at the Symposium but sadly absent from the exhibition), where an actual mechanical engine triggers off a projection of the Google Website when it's started up.

Taken as a whole, Cybersonica showed that when mixed in careful doses, the worlds of academia, technology and contemporary art can produce successful hybrids. Despite the high entry fee and a few glitches in the exhibition programme, the combined energies of all of Cybersonica's respective organisers promise to provide London with an important annual gathering.

CRASS: KILLING TIME
LONDON NFT
UK

BY PHIL ENGLAND

This rare sighting of the original agit-peace punks Crass was part of Never Mind The Jubilee, a series of film screenings documenting the early years of punk. Crass agreed to be involved on the condition that they could include live performance and new work alongside films originally made to accompany their concerts, and, with this mixed media event, rescued the evening from being a mere exercise in nostalgia.

Starting smack in the present, the new Penny Rimbaud text, "Oh, America", a powerful call for the empire to dream a new dream in equitable and responsible peace with the rest of the world, was delivered by a young American in front of a crying Statue of Liberty. By contrast, Eve Libertine's "It's You" inferred that our first responsibility is to ourselves and our own actions. It set up a dialectic that was to run throughout the evening.

The event coincided with the 20th anniversary of the Falklands war between Britain and Argentina. In the face of a number of TV shows effectively rehabilitating the war, it was a happy restorative to see *Yes Sir, I Will*, Gee Vaucher's 45 minute compilation of TV footage accompanied by Crass's original, angry and soul-searching tirades. At the time of the conflict, Crass raised questions the tightly managed media weren't asking and remain vindicated today when little is known, for example, about the coincidences between the timing of a shelved Peruvian-brokered peace deal (which went largely unreported at the time) and the sinking of the Argentine battleship Belgrano.

The Falklands gave Crass a concrete target for, and substance to, their anti-war rhetoric

PHOTOS (ROGALSKY): SIMON NORFOLK



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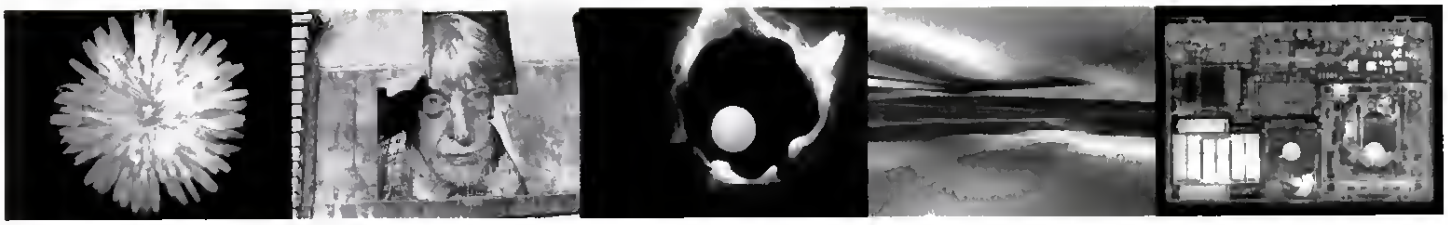
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Stills from Funki Porcini's *Fast Asleep/VDV* DVD

Choosing Death, an earlier Crass film by Mick Duffield, is comprised of black and white footage of a couple proudly displaying their new kitchen interspersed with imagery of war, abattoirs and crash test dummies. The implication is that complacent middle class suburban domesticity functions as passive complicity with the military industrial complex.

Duffield's *Tea Piece* from the early 70s predates Crass and illustrates the continuity between the group and the commune's precursor, performance outfit Exit. Based on looped sequences of a couple setting out a blanket on the house lawn in order to drink tea, the image of domestic bliss is undercut by squiggly hand painting on the frames and a soundtrack comprising a squelchy, static-drenched synthesizer duet by Annette Peacock and Paul Bley.

In between the films, disabled artist Nabil Shaban delivered a new Rimbaud text, "Us Boys", Steve Ignorant gave a cheekily nonchalant sung-speech performance of the evening's theme tune "Killing Time" accompanied by double bass, and Eve Libertine gave a rousing, stripped down version of "Hello, Hello". "Somewhere" was an early response to Gee's Falkland's footage and the only one performed by Rimbaud himself. It's remarkably introspective with a stream of consciousness, Beat feel underlined by its performance as a duet with tenor saxophonist Ed Jones.

The evening ended with a convivial open discussion with free beer that Steve Ignorant had liberated from backstage. Unwittingly Vaucher encapsulated the paradox facing the group and the movement it spawned when she wondered, "Do you confront the juggernaut head on, or do you work to undermine it?"

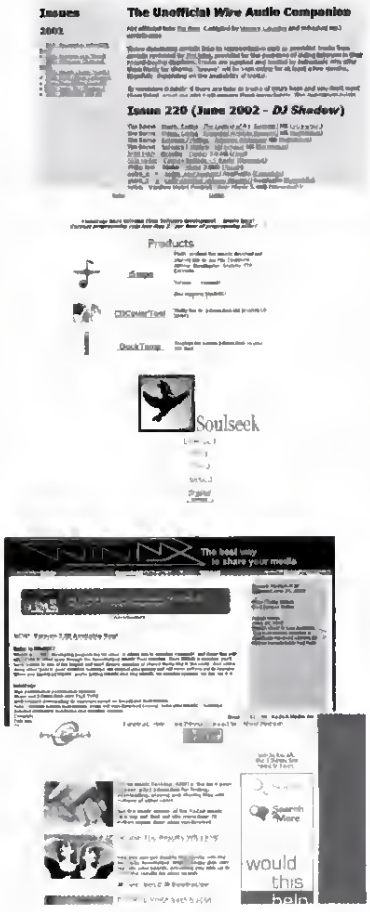
FUNKI PORCINI
FAST ASLEEP/VDV

NINJA TUNE ZEN57 CD+DVD

BY PETER SHAPIRO

Funki Porcini is an industrial refugee (he's worked with Survival Research Labs and SPK) who's traded the clutter of clatter for neat and tidy music to fall asleep to. His latest album, *Fast Asleep*, continues down the same somnambulent jazz-Ambient path of his first album. The accompanying DVD, entitled (helpfully for dyslexics) *VDV*, features eight tracks (six from the album), interpreted visually by the funky fungus and Team Alcohol. The videos are very much in the style of Hexstatic/Coldcut visuals, although slightly less literal. The opener, "What Are You Looking At?", doesn't exactly inspire confidence: it starts with the voice of Timothy Leary and an image of Earth as seen from outer space. So far, so very Dr Alex Paterson circa 1991. "Atomic Kitchen" is indeed made up of black and white images of water falling on a hot element, bouncing eggs, flour falling on the floor, all tightly edited to the music, but in a more abstract fashion than that description might suggest. "Ritmo Di Jazz" is a little cooler, looking like a Rorschach blot test designed by animator Bill Plympton. Text enters the fray on "Last Night Over Norway", representing the thoughts of a woman driving home from work. The production values are good and everything, but aside from your next at-home chill-out session, it's hard to imagine when you'd watch it. At least it doesn't have any fractals. □

Go To:



Recently it came to my attention that there was a song by Ross Bagdassanan's lovable troupe of speed-manipulated rodent warblers The Chipmunks called "Japanese Banana" with a passage that goes as follows. Alvin [the lead Chipmunk]: *"That's the worst banjo player I've ever heard."* David [The Chipmunks' adopted human father]: *"That's not a banjo, it's a shamisen."* Alvin: *"That's the worst shamisen player I've ever heard."* OK, so it ain't the Marx Brothers, but it made me laugh and given the shamisen obsession of at least one member of *The Wire* staff, I figured that I'd try to track it down online. The only catch was, this was after everyone's favourite download HQ **Audiogalaxy** (www.audiogalaxy.com) capitulated to legal threats by the Recording Industry Association of America (RIAA), demanding that Audiogalaxy should prevent copyrighted material from being traded across its network and effectively went offline, and my chances of finding the track were now close to zero.

Audiogalaxy's Satellite was the best music file sharing program – way better than Napster. It had everything, from the holy grail of HipHop record collecting, Supreme Nyborn's "Versatility", to tracks by the criminally neglected Southern rock group Stray Dog; from every volume of cut 'n' paste shenanigans put out by Big Apple Productions to just about the entire recorded output of Karlheinz Stockhausen (bar *Telemusik*, for some reason); from dozens of Prince bootlegs to several No Neck Blues Band albums. Almost the entire history of recorded music, from Enrico Caruso to Cradle Of Filth, was up for grabs, and suddenly, with no warning, this virtual museum of sound went silent.

So, just where does the discerning music fan now go to download MP3s? If you're after Eminem or Limp Bizkit, you can probably find exactly what you want, pretty much anywhere you look. But what about more obscure stuff that overindulged American teenagers and their T3 lines aren't going to have? The tragic answer is that if you're looking for Merzbow, Ikue Mori, La Monte Young, Oskar Sala, let alone that Chipmunks track, you're not going to have much luck. Burdened with the knowledge that Audiogalaxy had 729 Merzbow files, 72 Ikue Mori files and 728 Chipmunks files, I went out in search of the best of a slim bunch of alternatives.

The file sharing network **Gnutella** (www.gnutella.com), which is available on all platforms, was my first port of call. Any of the numerous Gnutella clients **LimeWire** (www.limewire.com), **BearShare** (www.bearshare.com), **Morpheus** (www.morpheus-os.com), **Mactella** (www.cxc.com), etc, etc) will give you pretty similar results – results that were not promising. I found a grand total of 7 Merzbow files (not including the dodgy .zip and .rar files that are obviously viruses), including a couple ripped from *Merzbox*, two Ikue Mori files, both taken from a live performance with Mike Patton and John Zorn, and 72 Chipmunks files, almost all from their reincarnation in the 80s, including a Techno remix of David Seville's "Witch Doctor" (yeesh), but no "Japanese Banana". The word on Gnutella is that it can be slow (true, but no slower than any of the other options) and that it is unstable (although, again, no more unstable than anything else), but I've found that if you've got relatively modern kit and tastes that run more mainstream, Gnutella is good option; plus, it's virtually impossible for the robber barons at the RIAA to shut down because there is no central server, which is why Napster closed.

The Fast Track network is probably the biggest thing in file sharing now. The network is shared by **KaZaA** (www.kazaa.com) and **Grokster** (www.grokster.com) and both are available for Windows. The other big issue here is that the programs include spyware, which tracks your Internet use. **KaZaALite** (www.kazaalite.com) has been developed with no spyware, but I couldn't get it to work. KaZaA turned up three Merzbow tracks, including a Maldoror track and an Autechre remix; the same two Ikue Mori tracks as on Gnutella, plus DNA's "Blonde Redhead" and a decent selection of Stockhausen: short snippets of *Kontakte* and *Hymnen*, and all 65 megabytes worth of *Stimmung*.

WinMX (www.winmx.com) is available only on Windows and runs on the OpenNap protocol, but turned up almost nothing the times I tried searching. Mac users have a much better option in the form of **iSwipe** (www.hillmanminx.com), which simultaneously searches across the Gnutella, OpenNap, Hotline and Carracho protocols. iSwipe turned up 16 Merzbow files, 20 Ikue Mori files, 44 Chipmunks files (but no "Japanese Banana"); and 61 Stockhausen files, including seemingly all of *Hymnen* and *Mikrophonie I* and *II*. Its interface is incredibly easy to use, but downloads were slow.

But there is hope still. *Wire* reader Vincent Kargatis, helped by individual MP3 posters, has resourcefully created **The Unofficial Wire Audio Companion** (thewire.kargatron.net). Still a young site, the Audio Companion holds promise to be a one stop shop for *Wire* related music. By *pointing* to the MP3s instead of actually hosting them, this can't be shut down by anyone. Genius.

Windows users after HipHop and electronic music should try **SoulSeek** (www.soulseek.org), a small community of file sharers. User groups for drum 'n' bass, Japanese music, HipHop, funk classics and jazz are integrated with an interface that is a bit more technical than most. It didn't turn up any Ikue Mori or Stockhausen MP3s, but there were 30 Merzbow tracks, and the 'wishlist' feature means that you can request that special Felix Kubin remix and hope someone takes pity on you. But I'll just have to wait and see if my knight in shining armour will come through with that "Japanese Banana" MP3.

PETER SHAPIRO

On Location

Live and kicking: festivals, concerts, events in the flesh

SONAR 2002
BARCELONA CCCB/MACBA/ MONTJUIC 2
SPAIN

BY BEN BORTHWICK, ANNE HILDE NESET & ROB YOUNG

Now in its ninth year, Sonar is now practically unreviewable. So much content is crammed into Barcelona's annual Festival of Advanced Music, in so many different locations and filling so many hours of each hyperdense day, quite simply it's no longer humanly possible for a single mind equipped with only one pair of ears to encompass it all. This year Sonar featured two large multimedia exhibitions, daily conferences, panels, a cinema, showcases of all descriptions, a record fair, a press fair, and a host of associated events, not to mention five different venues stacked with concerts and DJ sets, strictly scheduled for a midday start. In contrast to its modest beginnings as a small experimental affair, the festival now attracts close to 90,000 people, gaining it a place on the list of Spain's top 40 attractions in the Spain *Rough Guide*.

After the overcrowded nightmare that was last year's event, however, something had to change. Rather than cap ticket sales, the organisers have greatly increased the capacity of the daytime venue by making more productive use of the original space. It now spills out beyond the confines of the MACBA/CCCB courtyard to incorporate the ground floor of the museum itself, plus the Plaça del Angels opposite. The loss of intimacy resulting from a fivefold increase in venue size is something to mourn, but that loss is negligible when set against the relief of getting into almost everything you want to see without having to queue for an hour.

As usual, Sonar's live programming was considerably more adventurous during the day than at night. It was surprising to wake up around midday and encounter a duo micro-Improv set by trumpeter Axel Dörner with pianist Agustí Fernandez. Abetted by the latter's clanking, buzzing and plunking interior excavations of the piano's cavity, Dörner filled the hall with his reconstructed horn techniques, where the twisted brass becomes no less than a metallic extension of his windpipe. Keeping a tight grip on the tiniest of noises, his party piece is to use circular breathing while electronically manipulating the sound down to a tuba-like, elephantine roar.

Dominating the late afternoons were showcases from German and Californian labels whose recent output has successfully fused the glitch strategies of electronica, post-rock's melodic introspection and strong pop sensibilities. The most prominent, Berlin's Morr Music, took over the open air SonarVillage courtyard with Lali Puna, Isan and Manual. The relaxed atmosphere perfectly suited Manual, whose floating melodies and strings hung like threads in the hot sun, shimmering in the hash haze. Unfortunately, when The Cinematic Orchestra played the same space during Ninja Tune's showcase, their energy and focus failed to animate the swelling crowd. For the second time in three years, Plug Research's presentation imploded – through no fault of their own. In 2000, they had been supplied with the wrong equipment. Now, Safety Scissors's laptop was stolen from backstage just before his set was due to begin. The security lapse left the artist stranded. Towards the end of Dntel's set of surging electronics and bowed guitar, they invited Safety Scissors onstage. But understandably, he could only compenstate for his loss by freestyling about getting his laptop back.

In SonarLab, Static's downtempo set of warm electronic melodies for City Centre Offices kept the crowd content to relax in deckchairs or stretch out on the astroturf. Every year a couple of outstanding DJ sets leap out in SonarLab. This year, CCO's DJ Miles was one of them. Running the gamut between tracks by L'Usine, Kraftwerk, Rhythm & Sound and The Midas Touch, he had the crowd on their feet by the end.

AGF's fractured vocal/laptop cut-ups take on a dimension that is quite other when performed live. It would be almost impossible to replicate the clinical anaesthesia of Antye Greie-Fuchs's recent Orthlong Musork album *Head Slash Bauch* on stage. Although she worked with many of the same structures, she pushed the technology and her voice to the limits, resulting in an emotionally intense performance steeped in lyricism. In contrast, Wobbly's sample frenzy of a cut-up session produced an incontinent stream of beat and vocal nonsequiturs that somehow coalesced into micro-narratives.

Over at the MACBA, where a new venue, SonarComplex, had been established to house more experimental outfits, veteran New York experimentalists Christian Marclay and Prix Ars Electronica winner Yasunao Tone set the pace. When Tone delayed the start of his set to deal with an uncooperative CD player, and his tinkerings were projected onto screens by the onstage DV cameras, you might have been forgiven for thinking he was letting his Fluxus roots show again. But, repairs complete, Tone lit up a fat Havana cigar and let rip with his unique, gouging digital music, whose tempestuous chops and stuttering chunks were served particularly well by a sound system clear as gas. Rather than simply hanging a drone in the air à la Merzbow, Tone activates a relentless torrent of electrical surges and spark-showers in a tumble of fits and lurches. Though it has no rhythm to latch onto, it is hard not to be pulled along in its furious current. Though he has concentrated on static installation work recently, Christian Marclay showed that he's still the turntablist's turntablist: his four deck mix blasted through more changes and interlocking references than a twirl of a radio dial.

In the same venue, Australian Oren Ambarchi's improvised guitar set was constructed from a series of loops that slowly built into constellations of fluttering, breathing noise. Subtle accumulations and dissipations steered his set from tonal ambience to layered noise. His set couldn't have been further removed from Mego fiend Massimo's unrelenting barrage of digital noise beats. By juxtaposing sound with projections of fighter planes and hardcore porn, he spelled out, if a little crassly, that he was exploring the adrenaline rush of power.

Sonar perennials Pan Sonic, performing with Peaches, packed the Complex. But Peaches couldn't dominate this stage with her usual authority, and Pan Sonic's charged minimal theatrics hardly registered. The two acts appeared to be sizing each other up musically, as though a little coy about doing it together for the first time in front of the public. But there's no denying the force of Peaches's guitar and vocal attack, nor of Pan Sonic's woofer-wobbling accompaniment. And by the end, they had worked up a frenzied assault that drew on the raw energies of rockabilly, industrial and punk – one of the highlights of the festival.

The urban focus of Sonarmatica, Sonar's annual multimedia and design exhibition, was the Finnish capital Helsinki. Curated by the Avanto Festival's Tiina Erkintalo, the show set out to document the most cutting edge film, Web design, graphic design, sound art, mobile phone gimmickry and even furniture design produced in the city that has been dubbed the 'Rome of the North'. Much space was devoted to the chic Habbo Hotel (www.habbohotel.com), a virtual lounge for visitors to create an avatar and hang out with others. Highlights were Mika Taanila's film *Fysikaalinen Rengas* (*A Physical Ring*), based entirely on found footage of an anonymous 40s physical experiment cut to an eerie soundtrack by Ø (Mika Vainio), and Tommi Gronlund and Petter Nisunen's *Ultrasound*, with its two large concave dishes emitting a headsplitting electronic buzz when spectators directly placed themselves between the discs. A screening of a 1994 Blast First/Sähkö video following Panasonic (as they were then called), Gronlund, Jimi Tenor and associated young men around in New York, London and at home in Turku was unmissable.

The 'Sonar by night' programme happened in a gigantic conference complex just outside the city centre. Not much survives its inhospitable environment. But Matthew Herbert's anti-corporate Radio Boy performance actually flourished, despite experiencing technical problems that would have debilitated lesser performers. Going out under his House alias Luomo, Finland's Vladislav Delay provided one of Sonar's oddest spectacles, with his Muppet-like shock of blond hair bobbing and shaking in the distance as he laboured over a dub-heavy take on his stately, supremely blissed out Trance Antipop Consortium cast contorted shapes with their lyrical physics and physical lyrics, and Yo La Tengo fizzed lyrically in front of Jean Painlevé's films of the dream matings of octafish.

Rather than brave the enormity of the nighttime venue, many choose to cruise the independent parties that now proliferate in the smaller clubs dotting the city's narrow medieval streets. Barcelona's weekly Errorclub ran a nightly series of free events, including shows by Hrvatski and Greg Davis; ~scape presented Jan Jelinek live with Pole and DJ Barbara Preisinger, Super_Collider performed at the Nitsa club, and Expanding Records, Spezial Material and others threw their own label parties. It was already impossible to experience the almost infinite number of Sonars constituting the festival. Hell knows if anyone survived the rapidly expanding subculture of unofficial events feeding the mass of activities already subsuming the city □

Clockwise from top left: Agustí Fernandez and Axel Dorner, Christian Marclay, Lali Puna, Dntel, Wobbly, Antipop Consortium, Peaches with Pan Sonic, Yasunao Tone

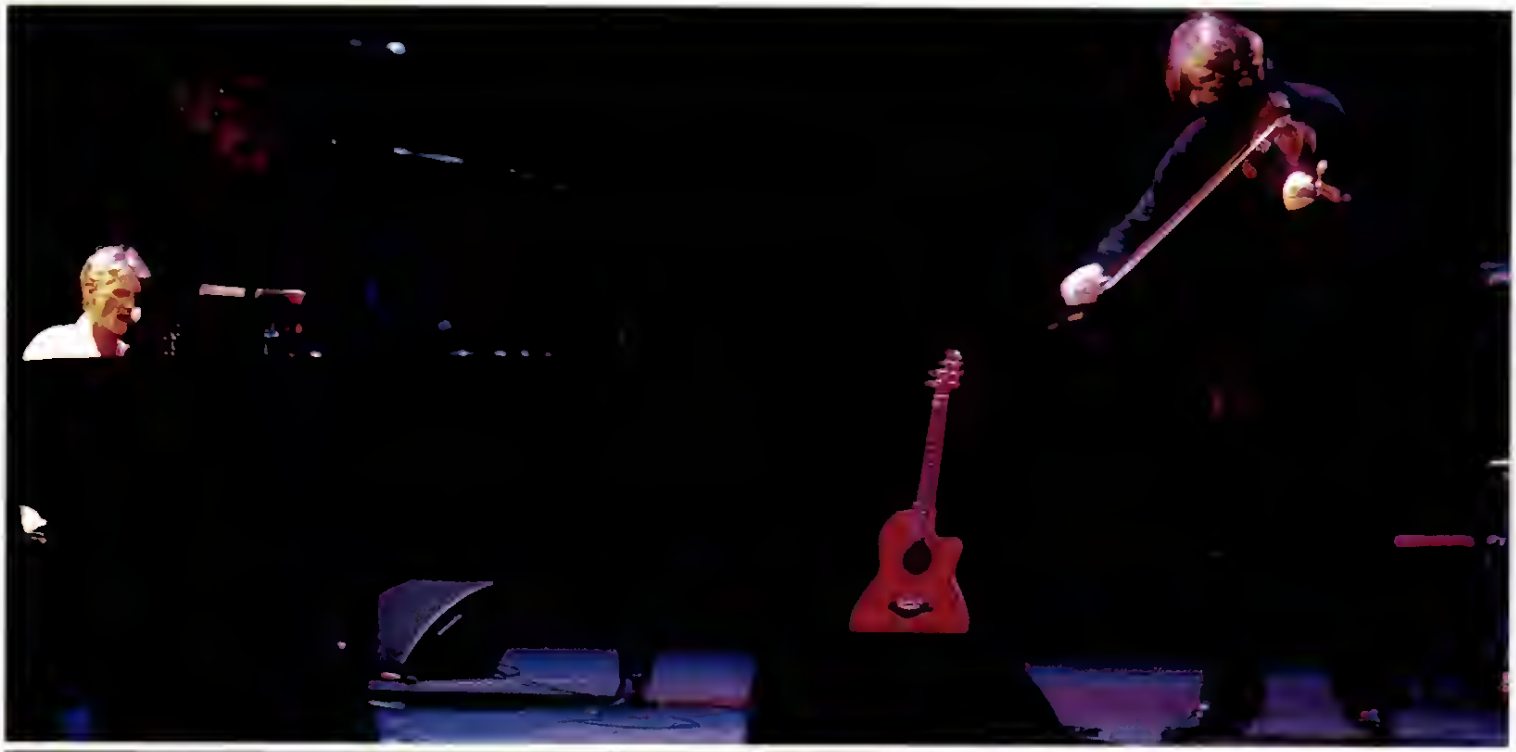









PHOTOS: MARTIN MORISSETTE






GROUND

NO NECK BLUES BAND + SUNBURNED HAND OF THE MAN + MOUNTAINS OF MATALLAMA
BRATTLEBORO COMMON GROUND
USA

BY BYRON COLEY

Brattleboro is a small city in southern Vermont. It is known for fine maple syrup, small herds of dairy cattle and hirsute enclaves of ex-urban bohemians scattered throughout its forested hills. Tonight, pulling into the centre of town, we see a typical example of the latter, clad in faded denim cut-offs, leather headband and sandals. It is only as we draw close that we realise it is not a local at all, but Catfish, a member in good standing of No Neck Blues Band's extended tribe, as well as the lead singer for Suntanama. Strolling the streets of Brattleboro in the late dusk of early summer, this city boy looks as comfortable as a tick. Accosted, he points us toward the venue, a second floor restaurant I last visited in 1974 to see a local folkie named Gushroom. I shit you not. My hopes are high that this evening's show will be even better than that one.

Mountains Of Matallama are friends of the No Necks from Brooklyn, and play a nice enough set of wah-wah vision trances, but it seems that they have either smoked too much or too little cheeb before taking the stage. They never really ignite. Next up is Sunburned Hand Of The Man, from Boston. Sometimes their work has a lot of jagged ratcheting submerged amidst its Krautish ecstasy, but they are in heavy groove mode tonight. Their set is built around the superbly bustling rock drumming of Phil Franklin, but it gets caught up in the hearty wholegrain vibe that hangs like alfalfa mist throughout this legendary vegetarian bistro. While they play, it's impossible to resist thinking (in a benign way) that they might do pretty well at one of those mudfests that Phish runs 100 or so miles north of here. The danger that lurks in the dark spots of Sunburned's CD-Rs doesn't show itself at the Common Ground. But they are a group of many parts and will surely rise to other occasions.

It is always difficult to describe what the No Neck Blues Band sound like, because they are in a constant state of expansion and contraction, both physical and musical. Tonight, they are "all there", in every sense of the phrase. Their set begins with Michiko X flinging cymbals and various other percussion detritus into the room's corners. She has a lotta raw energy for a woman in a pantsuit and the call to arms she issues opens things right up. As noted, the group is in full attendance, but this means jack shit. Drummer Dave Nuss is playing a cello; bassist Matt Heyner spends the whole night inside his bass bag, crawling around the floor with his arm shoved up the bag's neck sleeve, making him look like a prehistoric elephant trying to wangle its way out of a tar pit. Keith Connolly creates rustically roughshod percussion pulses, into which Jason Meagher, Pat Murano and Dave Shuford (fully audible for maybe the first time ever) drive different sorts of guitar inventions. When Michiko gets tired of percussing, she grabs her trusty alto and lets freedom ring. Viewed in semi-darkness, the event has the visual mystery of a Fluxfest, and the music moves in swells of ripsaw drone, totally de-braining those attendees who had been prepped for the show by the group's recent, rockist Revenant CD. Mmmm...

What the locals made of this wasn't easy to discern. But Catfish was diggin' it. And hey – he's just about as local as it gets. □

PETER HAMMILL
LONDON LYRIC THEATRE
UK

BY STEPHEN ROBINSON

A warm but grey Friday evening in June and we're in for the long haul with Peter Hammill. Ushered through labyrinthine corridors, past chalkboards etched with times and timings, only to surface abruptly and a little short of air into a scene worthy of Hermann Hesse. The three-tier, faux rococo reconstruction of Hammersmith's Lyric Theatre, encased in the concrete mausoleum that is the Kings Mall, is bathed tonight in a womb-like red light. As if to refuse any hope of at least some minimal renegotiation of one's senses with the surroundings, a third of the audience appear to be speaking German or Italian, note books, cameras and minidisc recorders are poised and primed, scrapbooks and CDs are at the ready in case of some chance baptismal autograph from the thin man himself.

As the chalkboards had already indicated, during the next 26 hours there will be three performances, each 100 minutes long, during which time Hammill and his accomplice throughout, violinist Stewart Gordon, will perform no fewer than 51 ballads (encore included). All being equal they would perform without repetition or hesitation, and deviating only by the measure of the loose and somewhat generous interpretation that Hammill appends to the category of the 'ballad'. The latter, he informs us from the outset, will be "a story told through a popular song". The wayward scope of this category allows Hammill to extend a broad reach across a catalogue extending back almost a third of a century, from his rare forays into period piece pastoral elegies such as "Vision" from his 1971 solo debut, through the thematics of memory, time and consciousness that marked his work with The K-Group in the early 80s to newer material, in which Hammill takes to task issues of domestic violence and paedophilia ("Just A Child"). Not withstanding the fact that these loosely gathered 'ballads' constitute only a fraction of what Hammill does, the sheer breadth of the material is an insistent reminder of Hammill's deep, uncompromising, and at times unforgiving commitment to his art.

Taking his place at the piano, Friday's night performance establishes a pattern that will be repeated throughout the marathon, five to six piano songs, switch to acoustic guitar for five or six more, an interval and then repeat in reverse. As a rule it's in the context of his piano songs that Hammill is at his most trying, though there are plenty of noticeable exceptions. Although functional, his piano playing airs towards the indifferent. His lyrical themes, which rarely resort to the merely imagistic, become more ponderous, and the need to express what I can only take to be a bid for emotional directness can lead him to sacrifice melodic integrity to the urge for explicit and over-wordy statements. Indeed, in the context of the songs in which Hammill steadfastly exposes himself in respect of the ugly economy of male desire, one cannot help but recoil. There's simply too much information, too little that's allowed to pass by way of the spaces inscribed in the song form, and his aggressively charged vocal dynamics can erupt here into hollowing histrionics, seemingly without regard to their setting.

What is striking, though – even here in the midst of the most unflatteringly Hammill-like – is that even when he's testing your patience Hammill remains an engaging, even captivating, orator. His approach to his material is endlessly adaptive, continually renewing and re-engaging his own interests and involvement so that every song appears to be presenting new challenges and new possibilities. There's both a freshness and a conviction in his performance that in every set is brought out most dramatically in the switch to acoustic guitar. It is here that Hammill seems most possessed and most possessing, at times pushing the material into a raging, highly charged assault on the senses, exploiting an unnerving dynamic range, from the pensive delivery of "Patient" to the cumulative rage of "Sign" and the firestorm encore "Central Hotel".

Present throughout, violinist Gordon summons an impressive and hugely sympathetic array of tonal accompaniments, from lysergic wah and fuzz trills through to a convincing one-man orchestra that allows the concert to exceed the limits of the duo format. And in at least two notable instances, "The Comet, The Course, The Tail" and "Traintime", Hammill appears to be as physically shaken by the close of the performance as his audience is shocked, recoiling abruptly as reality bites and the theatre returns to view. Yet Hammill proves to be no less commanding without the vitriol. With "Stranger Still", which closes the final set, Hammill turns from the mic, stilling the song to a softly stated a cappella, and addresses a stilled and silently rapt audience with a presence and a command that's rarely seen.

While Hammill's work with Van Der Graaf Generator appears to be receiving an enthusiastic rehabilitation in certain circles, his solo work will probably refuse to yield. But two things were confirmed by these three performances. Hammill has never allowed his solo work to ossify, and, as a consummate and commanding performer, he remains one of the few singers of his generation that continues to matter – to be seen to be believed. □

PHOTOS: SIMON LEIGH (HAMMILL), BYRON COLEY (NO NECK)

Peter Hammill with violinist Stewart Gordon at the Lyric Theatre. Bottom right: Moon madness in Vermont: No Neck Blues Band





Main squeeze: Pauline Oliveros 's birthday bash

SOUNDING THE MARGINS: 70TH BIRTHDAY RETROSPECTIVE CELEBRATION OF THE MUSIC OF PAULINE OLIVEROS

SAN FRANCISCO LORRAINE HANSBERRY THEATRE
USA

BY TOM DJLL

Pauline Oliveros has become probably America's most well known female composer, which may not be saying much in terms of recognition from the vast wasteland of US culture, but for the thousands of adventurous composers and musicians who follow her work and have studied with her and attended the Deep Listening workshops, Oliveros's gently subversive guiding presence has been an irresistible draw away from the upright, pristine walls and halls of academia. Over 100 musicians – including the ROVA Saxophone Quartet, Fred Frith, Shoko Hikage, Stuart Dempster, Brenda Hutchinson, David Wessel, Sarah Cahill, Tim Perkis, Chris Brown, India Cooke, George Marsh – gathered on the first weekend of June to celebrate her 70th birthday and pay tribute to her influence. An ambitious 40 year retrospective taking in over two dozen performances, Sounding The Margins was a resounding success in presenting a comprehensive overview of Oliveros's work.

A radically egalitarian approach to sound (rather than structure) is the link between Oliveros's work and that of John Cage. However, if Cage is influenced by ascetic Zen, Oliveros is more tuned to the sensuality of South Asian Buddhism. From a very early age she tells of her keen interest in the whole range of environmental sounds, and their power to open up the listener to new depths within herself. Her work from at least 1970, when she composed the earliest *Sonic Meditations*, has been deeply concerned with the act of what Oliveros calls "Deep Listening". Her Deep Listening work is in part a protest against the Western art music tradition of objectification, meaning the use and development of pieces of music as perfect objects of art, to be critiqued, commodified and canonised, and ultimately used as weapons in the great wars of culture. One needn't make a gravity-defying leap to link this kind of objectification with the culture's pervasive objectification of women and use of woman-as-object as commodities and weapons of cultural imperialism.

These political issues are exposed in an early piece like *Double Basses At Twenty Paces* (1968), a bit of muso-Dada theatre. It must have created quite a stir back then, as it spoofs not only performance forms and styles, but the thundering musical canon itself, exemplified, quite naturally, by Beethoven. During the Friday concert the piece played as a 'duel' between two bassists, complete with seconds and a referee-conductor. Quotes from Beethoven's *Fifth Symphony* popped up here and there, along with some technical exercises, jazzy plucking, raw noise, spoken commentaries, and much gesturing and mock-serious horseplay. It ended in a 'draw', which seemed a tad anticlimactic after such a long performance.

Most of the compositions performed at Sounding The Margins were mainly instructions for improvising, built around various metaphors of community and spirit. Mandalas and star patterns reoccur in the scores. Most, if not all of them, place Deep Listening at their centre: a clear pool of reflection to return to and draw new material for further creativity. Deep Listening suited ROVA just fine. The four reedsters proposed a *Sexual Orientation* (1998) that cheerfully bent some ears (if not genders). A five-pointed star provides part of the map for navigation; at its centre is the instruction "Just Listen". There are seven other options for the ensemble to use, in order, such as a 23-note 'row' and key-click rhythms, which Jon Raskin, on bantone, thunked smartly. Bruce Ackley and Steve Adams eased the group into a haunting, feathery choir which climbed high into the squeal zone. All in all, an outstanding yet subtle outing for ROVA, one which invited a focus on their taut ensemble interaction and evolved sense of time and phrase nuance.

Oliveros is an acknowledged pioneer of electronic music, but none of her tape music pieces were programmed. What a shame. The presenters felt they didn't have a diffusion system to do tape music justice. Perhaps, but having had a taste of the quality, depth and range of electronic sounds which accompanied the excerpt from *Io And Her And The Trouble With Him, A Dance Opera In Primeval Time*, I wanted more. This hypnotic work's visual component featured three dancers suspended on wires from the ceiling. At the end of each wire was a large rock upon which they perched, spinning dreamily. The dancers changed each of their positions so glacially slowly, that, when combined with their spinning, it was impossible to see the trio moving. Gravity flouted, time suspended, light and shadow made one.

There was no shortage of electronic sound onstage during the concerts, however. Another outstanding moment of the festival was *13 Changes For Malcolm Goldstein* (1986), written for the violinist but here performed by a trio of computer music masters, John Bischoff, Chris Brown, and Tim Perkis. Three white guys, three laptops, oodles of wires and cables and 13 poetic suggestions for music making all made for a rich sound experience, beautifully unfolding with crackling suspense, reaching into far-ranging horizons of electronica. The Deep Listening Band – Oliveros, Stuart Dempster and David Gamper – were in the house for the climax of the third concert, three seamless improvisations featuring Gamper's EIS (Expanded Instrument System), a sound-processing technology. The sounds of accordion, trombone, rattles and conches were transformed by the software into swirling electronic glissandi whistling endlessly overhead through a four-speaker array. This was then supplanted by the Cornelius Cardew Choir and Albany Community Choir's nuanced vocal perturbations, which settled into a drone on an ever-shifting chord of galactic proportions.

The meditative approach has its traps, too. On such a huge programme, one couldn't expect all of the improvised performances to be equally convincing. During *Sound Fishes* (1992) – where the players are instructed to "Listen ... like a fisherman waiting for a nibble or a bite. Pull the sound out of the air ... Move to another location if there are no nibbles or bites" – one player appeared to be listening, waiting, the others filled every fishing hole for miles with teeming schools of droning sound. Wavering commitment marred the quartet piece *What Time Is It?* (2002), where the percussionists' self-effacing non-engagement lent an air of frustrating hesitancy, despite the wonderfully floating, ethereal interplay happening between Oliveros on accordion and David Wessel's live electronics. An errant laptop threw a distracting element into the mix on the Deep Listening Band's jangly opening minutes during *Margin Calls* (2002). Only later, on *ElSing On The Cake* (2002), did everyone seem to sync up.

The composer herself provided a subtle coda to the final concert, simply titled *Pauline's Solo*, a ruminative accordion meditation. The solemnity of the occasion was laughed away by her appearance onstage in a bright blue clown's wig and sunglasses. If anyone else had tried this, it would have flopped, precisely because of her commitment to the moment. Oliveros can get away with this kind of joke and not lose an iota of credibility. It made for a perfect end to a long journey. Actually, there was one more thing: the audience's huge microtonal chorus of "Happy Birthday" □







Soul interaction: AGF & Vladislav Delay, Atom Heart and Radio Boy at Mutek

MUTEK
MONTREAL VARIOUS VENUES
CANADA

BY TOBIAS VAN VEEN

Montréal's Mutek festival of experimental electronic music has risen in prominence over the past three years by providing an intimate context to hear and see artists from around the globe dissecting genres like IDM, clicks + cuts, microsound, minimal House and Techno, often with the accompaniment of video and visual art. Each year, Mutek has struggled to maintain this intimacy in the face of a meteoric success that threatens to undermine the power of the events.

Mutek 2002 was a profound struggle of the contradictions between the 'experimental' and the 'rhythmic'. By admirably attempting to situate itself between the high experimentalists and the beat-oriented enthusiasts, Mutek garnered both criticism and praise from the two separate camps. This year, the festival was clearly demarcated, with more 'danceable' acts appearing at the larger, and less friendly, Metropolis concert hall, while the 'experimental' acts were granted the prestige of the Ex-Centris Cinema and New Media Centre. Those that fitted somewhere in between played the venerable Société des Arts Technologiques (SAT). Of course, the space in which an event takes place often determines the manner in which the performance is received, and the stand-out acts this year – of which there were many – played with the dynamics of each space, from acoustics to the audience's expectations, to pursue an agenda that broke the strict musical boundaries assigned by audience, critic and Mutek alike.

At Ex-Centris, Janek Schaefer delivered an articulate and precise performance on his tri-phonic turntable, along with assorted effects and loops. Schaefer coaxed diverse sounds from specially cut, skipping records with tactile turntable manipulations. Like other preeminent artists at the festival, he was working from a script allowing for accidents, improvisations and chance occurrences, inscribing a conceptual as well as sonic flow that held the audience spellbound. Sounds transfused the front and back of the room through the quadraphonic sound set-up, and slowly, tantalisingly, white-on-black video projections began to flicker across the screen.

Matthew Herbert's anti-globalisation routine as RadioBoy (sampling the sounds of Starbucks coffee cups, Big Mac containers, etc) was a reworking of the old agitprop tradition of seducing the spectacle. Playing the 'musical anarchist' role to the hilt by ending with his hands raised, giving the sign of the Beast, Gap bag on his head, all to the wild appreciation of the audience and a chorus of searing flashbulbs, Herbert is becoming one of the few 'serious' electronic musicians to cross over to the realm of popular music as a media personality, and unlike Moby, he has something to say.

Nova Huta conjured a surreal context to his 'kitsch' organ music by lip syncing for 25 minutes a full narrative explaining how he came to compose electronic music, a tale which includes a talking Socialist bird, his tragic Uncle and making music for factory workers in the 80s. His performance only became weirder when he started cursing (in English) at his script which kept blowing off a nearby synthesizer. Equally brilliant was Felix Kubin's decidedly slicker organ performance, complete with his trademark spaceman suit and a strong stage presence that persuaded the audience to *waltz* – a disconcerting as well as deterritorialising moment of carnival immediacy that overcame the electro-modern discourse. It raised the question: where should we be going, and what should we be doing, with this thing called electronic music?

Although this question was broached in words at the Friday panel concerning the philosophies and politics of electronic music – with statements revolving around retro-cynicism and the overabundance of desktop musician technologies and 'homemade' music – it was persistently and forcefully responded to by the artists themselves who attempted to overflow the bounds of performance. In doing so, these same artists broached the question of 'the live' in electronic, often laptop-based performance. Either 'the live' was imagined and realised by using analogue techniques – such as the organ playing of Kubin and Huta, and the turntablism of Schaefer – or by engaging in new ways of computer interactivity, such as Ben Nevile's self-programmed Max/MSP joystick patch. The latter also saw significant and exciting advances by Alexandre Burton, who captivated an afternoon SAT show by projecting his 'on the fly' Max patches, and by AGF (Laub's Antye Greie-Fuchs), whose stream of consciousness vocal directives, full of random bites of computer code, eerily framed an erotic and stark interstice between woman and machine. New technologies were also debuted at Deadbeats' live Internet jam with Berlin's Monotake. These inventive moments combated the perception that it's the lack of gestural theatre that dominates audience reception of laptop based music; the question is rather one of the difficulty of hearing something that is almost entirely imagined in its realisation.

It was the final Sunday performance that served as a reminder that the questions of the live and the experimental/rhythmic divide in electronic music are perhaps best resolved by the DJ, who had been absent up to this point. The lack of experimental, beat-oriented turntablists resolidified the high/low art distinctions that many of Mutek's performers strove to overcome. The DJ, as a purveyor and selector of musical memories and a distinct link to electronic music's Afro-American histories, could well combat experimental electronic music's current sense of stagnation, as well as tactically undermine popular music's appropriation of the DJ from an aesthetic weaver of narratives to a glorified, sexy jukebox. It was not by, or with, the DJ that this musical critique was carried out, instead, it was through the DJ *gesture* of the sadomasochistic jam session between Ricardo Villalobos, Dandy Jack and Atom Heart that explored the dark territories of the mix. It became apparent that the trio was not using MIDI to synchronise their gear, jamming as freely as only a laptop, sampler-based musician can, triggering samples, and playing chords and melodies on the fly, working with the other musicians to take the music beyond meaning and into the realm of physical affect. It was a supremely disjointed moment when Mutek not only felt (once again) out of time and in conflict with its own representation, but pursued perforated points of sonic ecstasy. □

PHOTOS: CAROLINE HAYEUR



LMC 11TH ANNUAL FESTIVAL OF EXPERIMENTAL MUSIC
LONDON SOUTH BANK CENTRE
UK

BY TOM PERCHARD

The programming of their 11th festival reflected the changing, more inclusive nature of a London Musicians Collective that is now as likely to throw its weight and dedication behind electronica or expenmental cabaret as it is to address the needs of the improvising old guard But the organisation's attempt to move in the soul-destroying circles of mainstream arts administration seems to have met with mixed success: after several happy years on the South Bank, the festival has been forced to move elsewhere for future events

The festival's first night was a gloomy, poorly attended affair The concert was opened by the long-running Russian group ZGA, here in a trio format of trombonist and two percussionists. Five minutes of wind tunnel electronic throb slid down over time and turned into Improv that really clattered. metal sheets acted as cymbals for an already industrial synth-drum kit, and the percussionists belted homemade bass drums made from outstretched and amplified elastic braces For the better part of an hour, the group alternated these free sections with the Neubauten-like foundry funk of semi-composed vamps Despite the initially impressive force with which the music was delivered, this absolute structural monotony eventually took its toll Like the audience, the group seemed to run out of interest well before the end

The wholly unremarkable laptop duo of Werner Dafeldecker and Christof Kurzmann explored a small range of attacks, before expanding their clean and calculated sound in the most polite manner possible Uninspired laptop Improv like this is uniquely irritating in its sonic pomposity and fidgety performance practice (enter with beer sit, click, swig). But DAT Politics provided everything this duo could not. Coming on stage to a theme tune, making stage announcements, even singing the French trio were brazen in their disregard for the 'interesting' The group bludgeoned and dismembered Euro club beats and Casio melodies with noisy Tigerbeat6-style comedy, burying friendly electro-pop melodies under a field of glitch and dirt. The sound translated from hard disk to hall exhilaratingly, with shards of detail bouncing around the room. From second to second they sounded like Blondie with beats, a particularly ill-natured Aqua, or a dafter and much more punk Daft Punk The set was a festival stand out, but the sombre audience seemed in no mood for fun, and the few that remained at the performance's close offered only polite applause

Saturday finished with the trio of Oren Ambarchi, Kaffe Matthews and Keith Rowe Ambarchi and Rowe used their guitar pedals to create waves of locust music, with Rowe in uncharacteristically reserved form The musicians sat séance-like at tables in darkness, their faces illuminated by lamps, with her eyes shut and head thrown back, Matthews stroked the keys of her computer like a medium consulting a ouija board The extreme amplification of this music of microscopic detail produced a psychological intensity and oppression that was engaging, if difficult to like

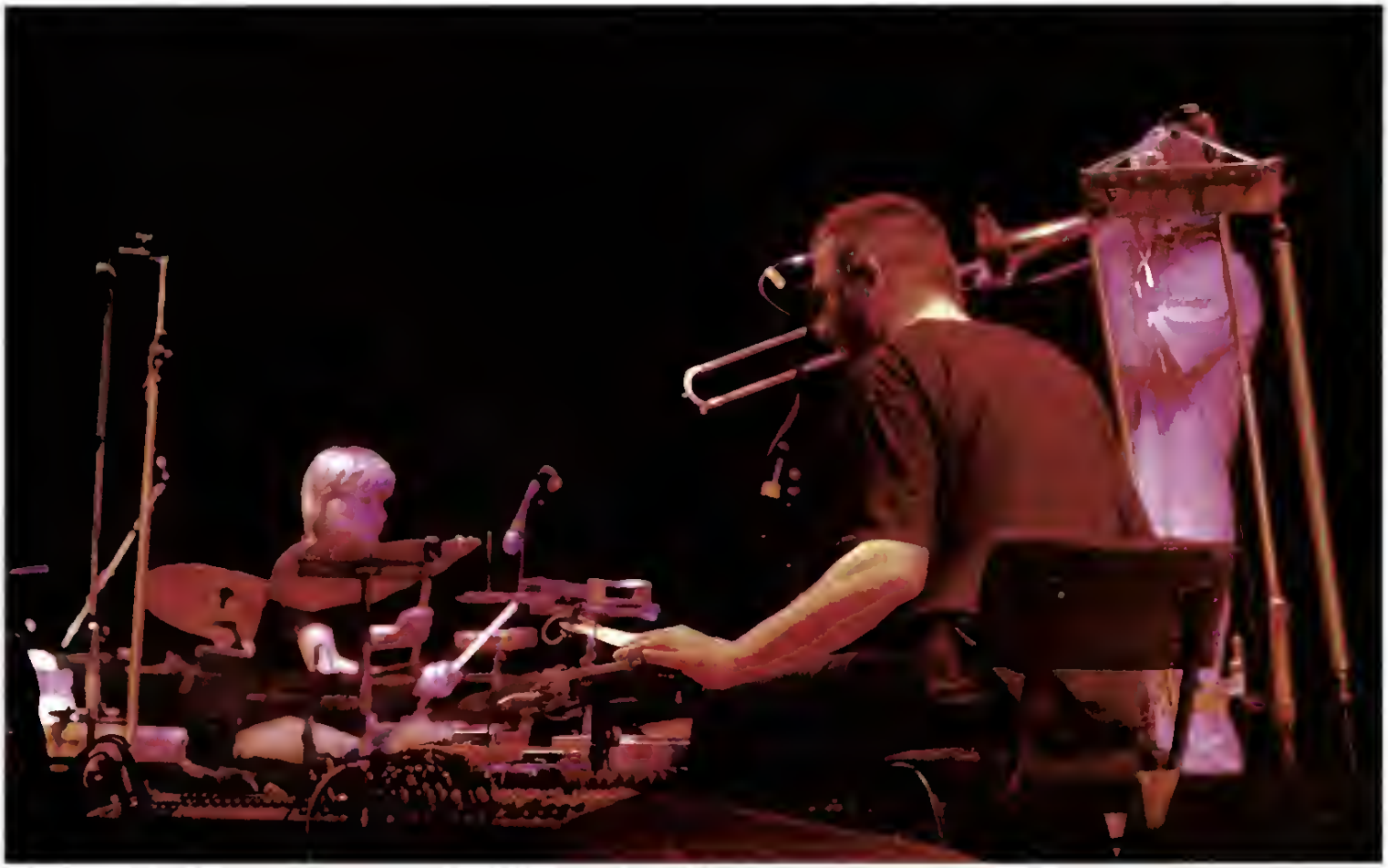
The second night had an entirely different feel to it, and a bigger and palpably happier audience heard consistently satisfying music Opening – and giving the performance of the festival – was the delicate trio of John Butcher, Xavier Charles and Axel Dörner. Charles played clannets, Butcher swapped between tenor and soprano saxes, and Dorner, wearing an orange suit that was louder than anything he played, used a Maynard Ferguson-designed slide trumpet The group's sound was charactensed by sustained woodwind chords surrounded by the airy noise detail of Dörner's anti-idiom This low splutter, Charles's beautiful high harmonics and Butcher's foggy multiphonics occupied three distinct planes, but the musicians often converged in sound and technique, and *always* converged in formal design, with material paragraphed and separated by thoughtful silences This was delicate music, something like Ligeti's earlier chamber works in its sustained clouds of texture Despite this delicacy, though, the music was never precious or careful – expanding the sonic palette over time, the performance culminated in a penetrating unison scream from Charles and Butcher.

After a well-paced set by the familiar and amiable personalities of Lol Coxhill and Veryan Weston, Sylvia Hallett and Anna Homler presented their act, Bread & Shed Hallett eventually produced her bicycle wheel, with which she has had some success, but spent most of the performance providing accordion accompaniments for Homler's vocals Homler sung folky melodies in usually unidentifiable tongues, while Hallett augmented her accompaniments with little sampled loops and webs of digital delay

The Toronto-based group CCMC closed the concert Michael Snow's piano was joined by Paul Dutton's vocals and John Oswald on alto sax The group offered several some rather old-fashioned Improv, the best feature of which was Snow's dextrous and inventive, Cecil Taylor-like approach. Oswald, slumped in a chair as if shot, gave the least committed performance of the festival, offering identikit Improv sax tricks and weary responses to Snow's more obvious calls Dutton explored vocal techniques in the Phil Minton manner, but created neither music nor spectacle, and he only engaged the audience at all when he began an embarrassing and actorly narration It would have been a disappointing end to the festival, but much of the crowd trooped to a post-festival party in a pleasingly murky Waterloo theatre, where Xavier Charles, Diskono and Danielle Lemaire provided clunkingly lo-fi electronics sets □

Clockwise from above: CCMC's John Oswald and Paul Dutton; ZGA; Lol Coxhill; Christoph Kürzmann

PHOTOS SIMON LEIGH







Out There

This month's selected festivals, live events, clubs and broadcasts.
Send info to *The Wire*, 2nd Floor East, 88-94 Wentworth Street, London E1 7SA, UK
Fax +44 (0)20 7422 5011, listings@thewire.co.uk
Compiled by Phil England



Electrelane at Ladyfest (left); Susie Ibarra at Jazzsaalfelden

UK festivals

BIG CHILL EASTNOR CASTLE
HEREFORDSHIRE
The festival for laid back types turns up in a new rural idyll overlooked by an ancient castle. Live performers include Cinematic Orchestra, Terry Callier, Fila Brazillia, A Man Called Adam, Aim with DJ Mark Rae, Ashley Slater, Wauvenfold, Alucidnation and Roger Eno, plus DJs Norman Jay, Mr Scruff, Jedi Knights and Jerry Dammers. Other diversions include a series of debates programmed in conjunction with Index on Censorship, films, videos and a pub quiz. Herefordshire Easthor Castle, 16-18 August, £89, 020 7688 8080, info@bigchill.net

ESSENTIAL FESTIVAL
LONDON
Annual dance and roots weekender on London's Hackney Marshes. The 'Dance' day features DJ Shadow, Blackalicious, Lamb, The Orb, Dreadzone, Scratch Perverts, Mobb Deep, Jazzy Jeff, Doug E Fresh, Goldie, Groovender, Fabio, Ed Rush, Aphex Twin, Luke Vibert, µ-Ziq, Kid Koala and Howie B (3 August), while the 'Roots' day features Femi Anikulapo-Kuti & The Positive Force, Asian Dub Foundation, ESG, DJ Shadow, Blackalicious, People Under The Stairs, New Flesh, Trevor Watts & The Celebration Band, Third World, Prince Buster, Toots & The Maytals, The Pioneers, The Ethiopians, Dennis Alcapone, Jazzy Jeff, The Herbaliser, Cinematic Orchestra, Finga Thing, Arthur Baker, Zion Train, Badmarsh & Shri, Adnan Sherwood and Luke Vibert (4). London Hackney Marshes, £37.50 per day, £65 weekend ticket, 09068 230190, www.essentialfestival.com

LADYFEST
LONDON
Annual explosion of Grrrl power. The weekend event features performances, workshops, film screenings, discussion panels and a visual art exhibition. Groups due to play include Electrelane, Holly Golightly, People Like Us, Chicks On Speed, Katastrophy Wife and many others. Who's playing when is largely undetermined, but the event kicks off at the Garage (1 August), Electrelane headline on the Saturday night (3) and Chicks On Speed top the final night (4). Daytime events include afternoon music performances Upstairs at the Garage and film showings at the Rio, Hen & Chickens and the Horse Hospital. Workshops focus on songwriting, video, creative writing, dancing, DJing, spoken word and, er, sewing. Panels cover women in the music industry, festival organising, self publishing and men in feminism. London, 1-4 August, www.ladyfestlondon.org

OLIGARCH SHIT TRANSFUSION FREE FESTIVAL
LONDON
Two free evenings of improvised music. The first night features AMM's Eddie Prévost in a drum duo with Tim Goldie, double bassist John Edwards in a duo with Ross Lambert on guitar, devices and voice, and a solo by Michael Rodgers (3 August). The second evening features blistering guitar and sax from Alan Wilkinson and Moshi, the computer, sax and feedback duo of Mattin and Mark Browne, more laptop work from Joel Stern and Alistair Leslie (with some saw and guitar thrown in for good measure) and the mystery duo of Romuald Wadych and The Animal Rights Sarcoma Bloc (4). Both nights feature open mic poetry hosted by Gavin Turk, and visual work by Malcolm & Tim Goldie. London Foundry, free/donation, 7.30pm, 020 8985 2816

THEM AND US
EDINBURGH
A series of eight concerts exploring the tradition of Scottish political songs from the 17th century to the present day. The concerts are organised under headings such as Jacobites, Scaborous Song, Campaigns & Causes, and so on. Edinburgh The Hub, 13-30 August, 10.30pm, £12 per concert, 0131 473 2000

International festivals

COCORICO JAZZ MEETING & FREE MUSIC 2002
FRANCE
Two consecutive improv festivals at one venue. The Coconco Jazz Meeting features Yves Robert & Jean-Marie Maddedu, Catherine Jauniaux & Louis Sclavis, Louis Sclavis Quintet, Xavier Charles & Jacques Di Donato and more (26-28 August). Meanwhile, Free Music 2002 features Phil Minton & Michel Doneda, Han Bennink & Terre Ex, Myra Melford Quintet, Barry Guy New Orchestra, Co Streiff & Irene Schweizer, Palinckx, Konk Pack, Joe McPhee & Raymond Boni, Phil Minton & Veryan Weston, Marilyn Crispell/Barry Guy/Raymond Strid, Aaly Trio with Ken Vandermark, Jean-Luc Cappozo Quartet, Amsterdam String Trio, FI Quartet and Daniel Humair Quartet (29-31). Mulhouse Jazz à Mulhouse, 00 33 3 8925 2332, www.jazz-mulhouse.org

FRUITS DE MHERE
FRANCE
Festival of improvised music held in a village in rural France between Bourges and Dijon. This year's event features Vinko Globokar, Metamkine, Klekta Red, Phil Minton Quartet, Tim Hodgkinson & Jacques Di Donato, John Russell Trio, Assumed Possibilities (Rhodri Davies, Mark Wastell, Chris Burn, Phil Durrant), Nmpengn (Greg Kelley & Rhob Rainey) and many more. Mhere, 1-4 August, 00 33 3 8622 7633, www.multimania.com/mhere

FUTURA 02
FRANCE
Annual concert series this year featuring tape works designed for multi-speaker playback by Trevor Wishart, Pierre Henry, Ryoji Ikeda, Robert Normandeau, Francis Dhomont, Michel Chion and Annette Vande Gorne. Crest Drome Espace Soubeyran, 00 33 4 75 25 11 38, www.vallee-drome.com/ot-crest

JAZZ EM AGOSTO
PORTUGAL
Improvised music and contemporary jazz hardy annual. The line-up includes Keith Tippett Tapestry Orchestra, Barry Guy/Evan Parker/Paul Lytton, Chicago Underground Quartet, Jeb Bishop, The Fred Anderson Trio, Barry Guy/Mats Gustafsson/Marilyn Crispell/Raymond Strid, Barry Guy New Orchestra, Paul Dunmall Octet, Fred Anderson & Hamid Drake and more. Lisbon various venues, 2-10 August, 00 35 21 782 3483, www.jazzportugal.net, www.gulbenkian.pt

JAZZSAALFELDEN
AUSTRIA
This year's event features Billy Bang's Vietnam The Aftermath, Jack deJohnette & Foday Musa Suso, Tim Berne, Moore/Horner/Vatcher, Gary Lucas's Captain Beefheart Project, Ikue Mori/Sylvie Courvoisier/Susie Ibarra and many more. Saalfelden, 23-25 August, 00 43 6582 74963, www.jazzsaalfelden.at

MINI [] MAX
AUSTRALIA > THE WORLD
New Music festival featuring concerts, special events and interactive Webcasts continues this month with William Duckworth's networked Cathedral Band performing *Code One*. *The Bomb* with guest Hindustani singer Sulagna Basu (1 August), an evening dedicated to the piano including Warren Burt's hour-long tribute to bop pianist Horace Silver, plus works by John Cage, Lois V Vierk, Peter Garland, Terry Jennings & William Duckworth and Erik Satie's *Entr'acte* with the original film by Rene Clair (2), William Duckworth's Cathedral Band performing *Cathedral IV: The Powerhouse – The Building*, local performers playing music by Percy Grainger, Kyle Gann, Warren Burt, Erik Satie, Stuart Dempster and others, and Kyle Gann performing his one-man mini-opera for voice and electronics (3). The event will be webcast live. Brisbane Powerhouse, 26 July-3 August, www.brisbanepowerhouse.com, www.monroestreet.com/Cathedral

PHOTOS: KAREEM BLACK (IBARRA); RUNE MORTENSEN (JAGA JAZZIST); RENE DAVILA (LEANDRE)



Jaga Jazzizt at Oslo Jazz Festival (left); Joëlle Léandre at WIM Free Music XXIX

OSLO JAZZ FESTIVAL
NORWAY
The stamp of The *Wire*-sponsored NO nights at Oslo's Blå club is all over this Norwegian event. The Thrill Jockey label starts its tenth birthday celebrations with Chicago Underground Quartet, Brokeback with Mary Hansen, and DJ John Herndon from Tortoise (7 August), followed by DJs Jeff Parker & Chad Taylor, Tortoise with Fred Anderson, and Fred Anderson solo (8). The following nights include icy electronica from Biosphere and Information (9), DJ Joakim Haugland, noise conspirator Alexander Rishaug, Sir Dupermann and the 11 piece lounge jazz unit Jaga Jazzist (10). Oslo Blå, 5-11 August, 00 47 22 42 91 20, www.oslojazz.no

WIM FREE MUSIC XXIX
BELGIUM
29th international festival of improvised music. The line-up includes the unusual pairing of Steve Lacy & Frederic Rzewski, Derek Bailey in a duo with flautist Carlos Bechegas, an organ recital by Fred Van Hove, pianist Sophie Agnel solo, The Kryonics string trio of Jon Rose, Aleks Kolkowski and Matthias Bauer, Paul Rutherford trombone solo, Joëlle Léandre in a duo with Pascal Contet, and the e-rax trio of Peter Van Bergen, Marcus Smickler and Thomas Lehn with live film from Petra Dolleman, and more. Antwerp Theater Zuidpool, 1-3 August, wim.fm@yucom.be, www.kantamedia.com/~oz/clubs/festival.htm

Special events

ART IN THE CATHEDRAL
IRELAND
A new four-channel sound installation in Cork's St Finbarr's Cathedral entitled *If The Golden Angel Flapped Its Wings And There Was No One There To Hear It Would It Make A Sound?* by Irish sound artist Danny McCarthy. The piece uses real and treated sounds of the cathedral itself. Cork St Finbarr's Cathedral, until the end of August, 10am-5pm, free, soundworksunlimited@ireland.com

BATEAU LAVOIR & ANNE BEAN
UK
Belgian performance troupe team up with Bow Gamelan Ensemble founder for one disonenting evening of sound and vision. Bateau Lavoir use live intruments and samples in open structured performances. Their recent collaborators include Archie Shepp and Phill Niblock. Anne Bean provides the visual element. London Transit Space, 2 August, 8pm, £3, 020 7359 3BB5, www.transitspace.com, www.imal.org/bateaulavoir

DMC TECHNICS UK TEAM SUPREMACY BATTLE 2002
UK
Annual turntablist battle zone. London Scala, 1 August, 8pm-2am, £7/£6, 0B700 60010D, www.ticketweb.co.uk

INDIAN MUSIC SUMMER SCHOOL
UK
A chance to study with masters of Indian classical music. The eight day course includes a look at the three main vocal styles – dhrupad, khyal and thumri – as well as North Indian classical instrumental music, and includes supported seminars, illustrated lectures, practical sessions on pakhawaj, concerts and open discussions. London School of Oriental and African Studies, £210/£170, 020 B742 9911, www.amc.org.uk

INTERACTIVE DANCE MUSIC SUMMER SCHOOL
UK
An intensive week long course in beat-based music, interactive interfaces, sound software, network-based instruments and algorithmic ('generative') composition. The tutors will be Nic Collins, Fredrik Olofsson and John Eacott and the course will include lectures, demonstrations and workshops with tutor support. London University of Westminster Harrow Campus, 2-6 September, 11am-5pm, £160/£90 plus accomodation, 020 7911 5000 (ext 445B), j.quaglia@wmin.ac.uk, www.informal.org/SSG

JAMAICA'S 40TH YEAR OF INDEPENDENCE
UK
Historical celebration of Jamaican music over two themed nights. Rockers and singers are represented by Al Campbell, Lloyd Brown, Sugar Minott, Frankie Paul, Tamlin, Peter Hunnigale, Vivian Jones, Leroy Gibbons and The Mighty Diamonds (3 August, 9pm-2am), and reggae and dancehall by Assassin, Lexxus, Hawkeye, Ward 21, Tanya Stephens, Cobra, Tubby T, Richie Dan, Admiral Bailey, Pay As U Go Cartel and NW Untouchables (4, 8pm-midnight). London Ocean, £2B per night, 020 7314 2B00, D2D B533 0111, www.ocean.org.uk

MOPOMOSO PIANO BENEFIT
UK
The stars of the London Improv scene come out to raise money to help refurbish the Red Rose club's piano. Playing in various combinations will be Steve Beresford, Chris Burn, John Butcher, Matt Hutchinson, Marcio Mattos, Borre Molstad, Steve Noble, John Russell, Larry Stabbins, Alan Tomlinson, Phil Wachsmann and Tony Wren. London Red Rose Club, 1B August, 8pm, £4.50/£2.50, 020 7923 4929

REGGAE: THE STORY OF JAMAICAN MUSIC
UK
Photographer Dennis Morris's work documents the greats of Jamaican reggae as well as the ghettos of downtown Kingston. This exhibition of his images launches a BBC book, *Reggae: The Story Of Jamaican Music*, whose publication ties in with a new BBC TV series on the same subject starting on 4 August at 8pm. London Inside Space, ends 30 August, 020 7355 4433

RESONANCE FM
UK > THE WORLD
The music and art radio/Webcast project by the London Musicians' Collective continues. A recent addition to the schedule is a nightly field recording slot co-ordinated by Chris Cutler from submissions by friends and associates around the globe. Special broadcasts in the past month have been undertaken by Steve Stapleton and David Tibet and guests have included Damo Suzuki. Broadcasts are across central London 5pm-1am weekdays and noon-1am at weekends. Web streaming is via www.resonancefm.com

ROCKARCHIVE
UK
Exhibition of rock photography by Rockarchive founder Jill Furmanovsky and others. Bath Spa University College Michael Tippett Centre, ends 31 August, daytime Mon-Sat, free, 01225 B76133, www.bathspa.ac.uk/mtc

SFT
UK
Simon Fisher Turner launches his new audio-visual album, *Swift*. The CD is accompanied by a DVD featuring a film collage by Adam Shepherd which gets its first showing at the launch. The film is followed by a discussion between Shepherd and Turner on the impact of digital technology on film. Turner and friends round off the evening by creating improvised soundtracks for the films of British experimental film pioneer Len Lye. London ICA, 7 August, 020 7930 3647, www.ica.org.uk

SHHH!!... IT'S BOLLYWOOD
UK
Continuing the Friday Late View occasional series at London's Victoria & Albert Museum is this Bollywood themed event. The night features DJ sets from DJ Ritu, DJ Harv, Sunny of Sutrasonic and Love Vs Revenge, traditional musicians and dance troupes performing routines from the most popular Bollywood films, plus screenings of classic Bollywood movies. Turner Prize-nominee Catherine Yass will be on hand to discuss an exhibition of her work. London Victoria & Albert Museum, 30 August, 6:30-10pm, £7.50/£5 in advance, 020 7942 2211, www.vam.ac.uk

SIGNAL RADIO
UK
Live event to promote the electronica internet radio station, Signal Radio. The line-up includes Juan Atkins, Farben, Andy Vaz, Portable, Lakuti, Axon and Alex Farrell. London The Rhythm Factory, 25 August, £14/£10, D2D 7503 3B41, signalradio@hotmail.com, www.signal-radio.com

SURROGATE CITIES
UK
A performance of Heiner Goebbels's work which uses texts and sampled sounds to explore the modern urban experience, with The BBC Scottish Philharmonic Orchestra and singers David Moss and Jocelyn B Smith. Edinburgh Usher Hall, 30 August, 7:30pm, £24/£5, 0131 473 2000

UNDERLONDONGROUND 2
UK
Seed Records return to the disused Aldwych London Underground station for a second evening of electronica. Last year the event was shut down before it had finished but the



Eavesdropper at WAV (left), Gary Lucas goes solo in London

organiser's claim that this year everything has been OKed in advance. The three rooms will feature Warp's Mira Calix and Plaid, Richard X (aka Girls On Top), Oebasser, Posthuman, Cursor Miner, Ardisson, Switzerland's Spezialmaterial crew, Suzie Sparkle, plus Rough Trade, Warp, Seed and Gescom DJs. London Aldwych tube station, 2 August, 8pm-3am, £12.50, info@seedrecords.co.uk

WAV: WAVES ON THE CANALS
BELGIUM
Exhibition featuring 19 sound installations located at various points on the Bruges canal system by artists including Philip Jeck, David Toop, Horst Rickels, Eavesdropper, Heiner Goebbels, Pierre Bastien and Scanner. Bruges canal system, until 15 September, www.brugge2002.b2/wav

On stage

KEVIN AYERS
One-off date for the former Soft Machine member in advance of a long promised new album. Canterbury Fayre, 23 August, www.canterburyfestival.com

BECK/BERESFORD/HESSION
Two improvisors recently profiled by *The Wire*, Mick Beck (sax/bassoon) and Steve Beresford (low grade electronics), join Paul Hession (percussion) for two evenings of group playing. Leeds Moderno Cafe (1 August), Sheffield The Grapes (2)

CHRIS BROKAW + JAMES DRR COMPLEX + AUDIOWHORE
Boston guitarist and drummer supported by the John Fahey influenced James Orr Complex and Tom Davies's guitar and electronics project. London Arts Cafe, 7 August, 8pm, £6.50, 020 7392 9032

JOHN BUTCHER & PHIL MINTON
Afternoon launch concert at North London's specialist music store for the top-notch improvising duo's new Grob CD *Apples Of Gomorrah*. London Sound 323, 17 August, 3pm, £3, 020 8348 9595

TERRY CALLIER
Veteran 60s singer-songwriter continues his comeback as part of a benefit for Greenpeace's Save or Delete campaign to stop logging in the world's ancient forests. The evening also features other live acts including Zohar plus DJ Martin Morales. London Cargo, 14 August, 7pm-1am, £7 after 9pm/£5 before, 020 7613 7731, www.cargo-london.com, www.saveordelete.com

CHRIS CUNDY
Short and simple compositions and improvisations for solo bass clarinet. Cheltenham Pittville Pump Room, 25 August, 2pm, free, 01242 523852

THE ELECTRIC PRUNES
60s garage legends' first UK show since 1967. Canterbury Fayre, 25 August, www.canterburyfestival.com

THE GREY WOLVES
Harsh electronics and experimental rock. Selly Oak Grover & Mort, 15 August, £4, 0121 472 0136

AKEMI KUNIYOSHI ENSEMBLE
Keyboardist Akemi Kuniyoshi in a quartet with reed player Paul Moss, percussionist Lukax Santana and trumpeter Gerry Gold. London Saint Cyprian's Church, 10 August, 7.30pm, £7/£5, 0790 1B2 5115

LIARS
Blast First's first new signing for many years return to the UK after supporting Sonic Youth on tour. The New York art punks are promoting their debut album *They Threw Us All In A Trench And Stuck A Monument On Top* and are supported by Miss Black America. Glasgow King Tuts (1 August), Birmingham Academy 2 (2), Sheffield Leadmill (3), Manchester Night & Day (4), Cardiff Barfly (5), Leicester Princess Charlotte (6), Colchester Arts Centre (7)

LONDON IMPROVISERS' ORCHESTRA
Monthly meeting of the all-star massed ensemble performing conducted improvisations and new openended compositions. London Red Rose Club, 4 August, 8pm, £5/£3, 020 7263 7265

LOVE WITH ARTHUR LEE
The original psychedelian tours. Aberdeen Lemon Tree (22 August), Edinburgh Liquid Room (23), Canterbury Fayre (25), Leeds Irish Centre (27). www.lovewitharthurlee.com

GARY LUCAS
Former Magic Band guitarist performs his first solo acoustic show in the UK. London Kashmir Klub, 28 August, 10pm, free, 020 7224 2556, www.kashmirklub.com

LEE SCRATCH PERRY
The Upsetter returns. London Jazz Cafe, 19-21 August, £17.50, 020 7916 6060

RADIO TARIFA
Spanish music and dance troupe mixing Moorish

UK Radio

National

BBC RADIO 1 97-99 FM

JOHN PEEL
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The indie nation's bible

GILLES PETERSON
Wednesday midnight-2am. Post-Acid jazz

FABIO & GROOVERIDER
Friday 2-4am. Vanguard drum 'n' bass

WESTWOOD RAP SHOW
Friday 11pm-2am/Saturday 9pm-midnight
HipHop flavas

REGGAE DANCEHALL NITE
Saturday midnight-2am. Bass culture

BBC RADIO 3 90-93 FM

LATE JUNCTION
Monday-Thursday 10.15-midnight
New Music compendium

JAZZ LEGENDS
Friday 4-5pm. Archive recordings

ANOY KERSHAW
Friday 10.15-11.30pm. World Music

JAZZ DN 3
Friday 11.30pm-1am
Modern jazz in session and concert

WORLD ROUTES
Saturday 1-2pm
Lucy Duran presents a travelogue of global music

JAZZ FILE
Saturday 6-6.30pm
Documentary magazine

HEAR AND NOW
Saturday 10.45pm-1am. New Music magazine

MIXING IT
Sunday 11pm-midnight
Hyper-eclectic mix of avant sounds

Regional

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95.5/103.9/104.5 FM, 855 MW

ON THE WIRE
Saturday 10pm-midnight. *The Wire*'s dub columnist Steve Barker mixes it up wildstyle

BBC MERSEYSIDE
95.8 FM, 1485 MW

PMS
Sunday midnight-2am. Eclectic mix of avant sounds

BBC SCOTLAND 92.4-94.7 FM

FROM BEBOP TO HIPHOP
Wednesday 7.05-9pm, Sunday 10.05pm-midnight
Jazz and nu-beats

CABLE RADIO 89.8 FM
(MILTON KEYNES)

THE GARDEN OF EARTHLY DELIGHTS
Friday 10pm-midnight. Eclectic avant mix

KISS 100 FM (LONDON)

PATRICK FORGE
Sunday 10pm-midnight. Eclectic jazz-not-jazz mix

FROST AND HYPE
Sunday 3-5am. Jungle

4 HERO
Monday 2-4am. Jazz Jungle, cyber soul, breakbeats

MATT JAM LAMONT
Wednesday 2-4am. More breakbeat science

LONDON LIVE 94.9 FM

SOLID STEEL
Monday midnight-2am
Mad mixing from the Ninja Tune mob

CHARLIE GILLETT
Saturday 8-10pm. World Music, roots and R&B

RANKIN' MISS P: RIDDIMS & BLUES
Saturday 10pm-midnight. Strictly roots

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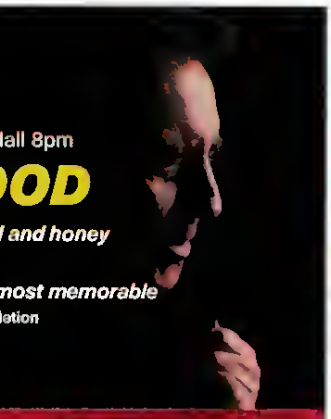
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6 Beachwood Sparks & Jeffrey Lewis £7 adv
15 Mactwo Sound presents Wheeler, Sulzman, Parricelli Trio £12/ £8 concs
16 Mella Faye & The Big Band £7/ £5 concs
25 Demo Heaven 5pm-10.30pm FREE
29 Strange Fruit & Candle Records present: Darren Hanlon www.strange-fruit.co.uk £5 adv/ £6 on door
30 Lunar Lounge presents: The Dene Drayton Unit & The Million Dollar Man £8.50

September 2002

7 Strange Fruit presents: Butterflies of Love www.strange-fruit.co.uk £5 adv/ £6 on door
11 Anti-Apathy £5 adv/ £6 on door
12 James Yorkston £7
19 Mactwo Sound presents. Dhafer Youssef £12/ £8 concs
22 Demo Heaven 5pm-10.30pm FREE
27 Celloman www.celloman.co.uk £7.50 adv/ £8.50 on door

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LMC
LONDON ARTS
www.l-m-c.org.uk



Tom Chant at the Klinker and Mbalm (left); Matthew Herbert incoming at Taktlos

medievalism and traditional Andalucian styles with contemporary flourishes Edinburgh Festival (19 August), Glasgow Tolbooth (20)

KENNY WHEELER
The star trumpeter in a trio with Stan Sulzman and John Parricelli London The Spitz, 15 August, 8pm, £12/£8, 020 7392 9032, www.spitz.co.uk

Club spaces

ASLEEP AT THE WHEEL
City Rockers Special with classic electro, new broken beats and dirty electronica London Embassy Bar, 30 August, 020 7359 7882

BAGGAGE RECLAIM
Monthly mix of "experimental music, post-improv and neo-pop". This month features the first London solo performance from former Scars guitarist Paul Research, hyper minimalist TripHop aesthetics from Cryogenic, solo bassoon from Mick Beck, leftfield singer-songwriter Joe Quillin and his group, plus LA vocalist Anna Homler who returns with her regular toys, voice and cheap electronics trio with Steve Beresford and club host Richard Sanderson. London 12 Bar Club, 25 August, 8pm, £6, 020 7916 6989, www.bagrec.com

BURST COUCH
Regular free-for-all of improvised electronics, low-fidelity popdrones and otherness hosted jointly by Planetsounds, Pigdog and RSI Recordings This month 3Dtanx, Thought Universe, NCR and John Thomas Manchester Scubar, 17 August, 9pm-2am, £3, 0161 881 5565, www.rsirecordings.co.uk

CONSUME
Monthly experimental sounds featuring the return of the mighty Eye And Ear Control and Bubblewrap Holocaust plus DJ action from Consume regulars Glasgow West 13th, 26 August, 7-11pm, £1, 0141 576 5018, www.consume.freeserve.co.uk

EAT YOUR OWN EARS
The East London space relocates to North London with a Lo Recordings night featuring Hairy Butter and guests (14 August), and a night hosted by the Warp affiliated HipHop label Lex featuring Tom Brown and guests (28) London Lock Tavern, 8-11:30pm, free, www.eatyourownears.com

FABRIC LIVE
Sender plays live (to be broadcast as part of BBC Radio 1's The Peel Sessions Live) plus James Lavelle, Andy C, Fabio, John Peel and Paul Thomas (2 August), Scratch Perverts, Goldie and Groovender (9), James Lavelle and Groovender (16) and Groovender and UNKLE (23) London Fabric, 9.30pm-5am, £12/£10, 020 7336 8898, www.fabriclondon.com

FREE RADICALS
Monthly improvisation night featuring *The Wire*'s Clive Bell on blown instruments with Sylvia Hallett on bowed instruments, plus David Ryan/Matt Hutchinson/Tony Wren. London St Cyprian's Church, 7 August, 8.15pm, £5, 020 7923 4929

KLINKER CLUB
Off the wall music and performance space This month's line-up features FJQ (Robin Musgrove, Jerry Bird, Alfredo Genovesi, Ntshuks Bonga), Rob Mills/Tom Scott/Stanley Adler/Nick Doyne-Ditmas (1 August), Albert Bon & Theo Green's The Celebration Of The Lizard (8), Tom, Carol & Michael Chant, Larry Stabbins solo, Blind Plastic Reunion, Canada's Joe Sorbara with Tom Arthursly, David Leahy Johnson (15), The Divorce At Christmas Of Course (Racehorse), Geoff Bamford & Alan Lofting (22), Bohman Brothers, James Holcombe, Dave Fowler/John Gneve/John Edwards, (29), Club Of Rome, Nev Hawkins, Rhodri Davies & Angharad Davies (30) More acts are likely to be added to all nights, plus an exhibition featuring 60 years of Bob Cobbing's poetry runs throughout the month London Sussex, 9pm, £4/£3, 020 8806 8216, www.theklinker.freeserve.co.uk

KOSMISCHE
Sixth birthday party with Jagz Kooner (Primal Scream), Icarus, Dubliners Schroder's Cat and regular DJs London Upstairs at the Garage, 27 July, 8pm-3am, £6/£5, 020 7609 181B

MBALM
This month's name for the Bohman Brothers' night of Improv and beyond The Unseemly Duo featuring Mark Browne & Steve Nash and guests (5 August), Chris Cundy, The Motion Sickness Majorette Show, Die Trip Computer Die (12), Larry Stabbins solo, Mary Morrison/Ian McLachlan/Robin Musgrove/Nick Stephens/Maggie Nicols, Beck Drenching Pleasure featuring Mick Beck, Mr THF Drenching and Miss Sonic Pleasure (19), Graham Halliwell & Mark Wastell, Rhodri Davies & Simon Vincent, Tom Chant & Ben Drew (26) London Bonnington Centre, 8pm, £4/£3, 01932 571323

THE MAGIC LOUNGEABOUT
Chillin' not illin' with Mixmaster Morris and friends London Spitz, 11 August, 4-10pm, £2/£1, 020 7392 9032, www.spitz.co.uk

ONGAKU: ENJOY SOUND
New improvised music series in an old church now converted into a gallery and bar The launch event features AMM's Eddie Prévost in a duo with Derek Bailey, John Edwards/Ross Lambert/Nathaniel Catchpole and Romuald Wadych/Sandy Kindness/Nishide Takehiro London 291 Gallery, 20 August, 8pm, £5/£2, 07905 532985

THE REMIX NIGHT
Bastard pop and bootlegging with Xfm residents James Hyman and Eddy Temple-Morris plus special guests London Cargo, 15 July, 7pm-1am, £5 before 9pm/£7 after, 020 7613 7731, www.cargo-london.com

THE SPIRIT OF GRAVITY
A night of experimental and electronic music showcasing talent from the South East This month features Multiplex and a collaboration between Audio Restoration and Fly8yWire Brighton Free Butt, 13 August, 8pm, £2, 01273 603974, www.maphead.org.uk

Incoming

THE BIG CHILL: NAXOS 2002
GREECE
The Big Chill makes its annual trip to the Greek island with a line-up that includes Mixmaster Morris, Roger Eno, Lol Hammond, Hexstatic and more Naxos, 22 September-1 October, www.bigchill.net

BITE: 02
UK
September highlights of London Barbican's season of international theatre include The Merce Cunningham Dance Company performing works to music by John Cage, Takehisa Kosugi and Christian Wolff (10-14 September), *Three Tales*, a digital opera by Steve Reich and Beryl Korot (18-21), and Robert Wilson's *Woyzeck*, with music and lyrics by Tom Waits and Kathleen Brennan (27-29) London Barbican, 020 7638 8891, www.barbican.org.uk

DISSONANZE
ITALY
Annual electronic music event this year co-sponsored by *The Wire*. The line up includes Biosphere, Luke Slater, Radio Boy, Thomas Brinkmann, Maurizio Martusciello, Prefuse 73, The Hacker, Eclat and others Rome, 13-14 September, 00 39 06 4782 5797, www.dissonanze.it

FOURTH ANNUAL HIGH ZERO FESTIVAL OF EXPERIMENTAL IMPROVISED MUSIC
USA
Featuring "30 of our favourite improvisors from Baltimore, North America and Europe" playing in various combinations over four days Performers include Mike Cooper, Thomas Lehn, Peter Zummo, Eugene Chadbourne and John Berndt Baltimore The Theater Project, 26-29 September, 8pm, $12 per show, www.highzero.org

TAKTLOS
SWITZERLAND
Avant music event this year featuring 242 Pilots and Alva Noto (Carsten Nicolai) live plus video clips by Christian Fennesz, Curd Duca, Matthew Herbert, Thomas Brinkmann and others (7 September), Alvin Curran's flying grand piano sound installation *Music In The 20th Century* (12), Curran's new Filarmonica group with Fred Frith, Shelley Hirsch, Joan Jeanrenaud and William Winant, plus Cortex featuring Alex Buess, Daniel Buess and Roger Graf (13), Alvin Curran's Filarmonica, plus Steamboat Switzerland playing music by Michael Wertmüller (14) Bern venues tbc, www.taktlos-bern.ch

THRILL JOCKEY'S 10TH ANNIVERSARY
UK
All day event to celebrate the Chicago label's 10th birthday featuring Tortoise, The Sea & Cake, Trans Am, Chicago Underground Duo, Bobby Conn, Eleventh Dream Day, Brokeback and Radian. London Ocean, 15 September, midday-midnight, £20 (tickets include a free CD), 020 7314 2800, 020 8533 0111, www.ocean.org.uk

Out There items for inclusion in the September issue should reach us by Friday 2 August

PHOTOS: OLLY HEWITT (CHANT); EVA VERMANDEL (HERBERT)



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Brief History
Founded in early 1995 with the debut Boymereng 12" (by Bark Psychosis's Graham Sutton). Releases by The Sons Of Silence, Faultline, Susumu Yokota, Manitoba and the *Invisible Soundtracks* series have allowed us to build slowly but surely. Still going, which is a surprise in itself

Statement of Intent
Keep people guessing. We don't like to be pinned down. And we're in it for the long haul – the music we're releasing now will still sound good in ten, 20 years. We believe in the strength of the artefact – the releases look and feel as good as they sound. Organic, playful, emotional, indefinable music for humans

Future Plans
A new budget price label sampler very soon. New album and European dates by Susumu Yokota this autumn. More from Manitoba, Murcof, Rob Ellis, Gorodisch, Eardrum in early 2003. A fourth and final *Invisible Soundtracks* album. A soundtrack reissue label A nice new front end for the website, courtesy of Non-Format.com. Some pleasant surprises

Choice Cuts
Susumu Yokota: *Sakura*
Murcof: *Martes*
Ase Chang & Junray: "Hana" 12"

Info and manifesto: Tony Morley

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A fully searchable index of issues 100-203 is available at www.thewire.co.uk
The site includes downloadable articles from sold out issues

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160 **Nurse With Wound** Pierre Henry AR Rahman Ivor Cutler's Jukebox Return of the OJ (X-Men Kid Koala, Invisibl Skratch Piklz, Peanut Butter Wolf) As One John Russell, Workshop

161 **Juan Atkins** Alan Douglas Mark 45 King, The Primer John Cage Adnan Sherwood's Jukebox Kenny Wheeler, Origin Unknown Brian Eno

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164 **Pleid** WS Burroughs To Rococo Rot, Pauline Oliveros, Yusef Lateef Graham Haynes Stereolab's Jukebox Mats Gustafsson

165 **Jim O'Rourke** Oskar Sala Le Post Rock Français (Odd Size Tone Rec Sister Iodine Kasper Toeplitz) Butch Morris 4 Hero's Jukebox Faust, Ansuman Biswas J Saul Kane Hal Willner

166 **Alec Empire** Neurofunk flavas (Source Direct Mathx Optical Groovender No U Turn) Hanpriasad Chaurasia Bootsy Collins's Jukebox The Primer Grateful Dead Cyro Baptista Company Flow Tim Berne

168 **Matthew Shipp** Fred Frith Lalo Schifrin Julian Cope's Jukebox The Primer Field Recordings Hugh Davies Req Un Caine Kevin Ayers

169 **Future Sound Of Berlin** (Porter Ricks Chain Reaction Vainqueur Monolake Substance Various Artists) Terry Callier Suicide's Jukebox Fela Kuti Buckethead Toshinori Kondo Panacea Le Quan Ninh

170 **Tony Conrad** The Primer Captain Beefheart, Phuture David Thomas's Jukebox Charles Bullen The Pastels

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177 **Björk** Fugene Chadbourne Squarepusher's Jukebox The Primer James Brown John Mayer Bob Dylan, Alan Licht Tied & Tickled Trio

178 **Portishead** La Monte Young meets Mark Webber Derek Bailey's Jukebox Timbaland Marc Ribot Frederic Galliano Jarboe Jeff Noon's Epiphany

179 **David Sylvian** 98 Rewind (Records of the Year), Jim O'Rourke's Jukebox The Primer Turntablism Undercurrents 1 Origins of Electric Sound John Cale Harry Partch Pierre Henry Red Crayola

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181 **Nick Cave** Pan Sonic The Primer Ornette Coleman Kevin Shields's Jukebox Maryanne Amacher Undercurrents 3 Music of the Spheres Fennesz Joe Morris

182 **Arto Lindsay** Genesis P Orridge Luc Ferrari Rhys Chatham Natacha Atlas's Jukebox Vinicius Cantuaria Undercurrents 4 The Microphone

183 **Mark E Smith** Alec Empire's Jukebox Peter Thomas Undercurrents 5 The Music of Chance A Certain Frank Stuart Dempster Can live

184 **Stockhausen** The Dead C The Primer Tropicalia Undercurrents 6 Autobahn Fever Stock Hausen & Walkman's Jukebox, Ozomatli Suetsu & Underwood David Toop on Fela Kuti

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186 **Scanner** Tony Oxley Blixa Bargeld's Jukebox The Primer Japanese Psychedelia Undercurrents 8 Sound Art, Piano Magic Plug Research

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189 **Iggy Pop** The Primer Lee Perry Lee Konitz's Jukebox Undercurrents 11 Ecstatic Jazz People Like Us Pelt, Kevin Drumm

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197 **Wordl** (Anti-Pop Consortium Mike Ladd Dose One), 23 Skidoo Kim Gordon's Jukebox Tangents Solar Myth Approaches William Hooker, Toshimaru Nakamura, Reynols Capt Beefheart

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199 **Soyal Trux** Burnt Friedman Sunny Murray's Jukebox Tangents Simon Reynolds on dub 'n' roots Francisco Lopez Luther Blissett Joseph Suchy, Lois V Vierk Faust

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201 **Chicago Stories** (Isotope 217 Chicago Underground Duo Trio & Orchestra) Sainkho Namtchylak Dan The Automator Add N To (X)'s Jukebox Tangents Music & Architecture Janek Schaefer Yat Kha

202 **Zakir Hussein** Christian Wolff HiM The Primer British folk & folk rock Otomo Yoshihide's Jukebox Rob Ellis, Bill Wells Beta Bodega Coalition

203 **Sigur Rós** Rewind 2000 (Records of the Year), Mark E Smith's Jukebox Arnin Braka David Grubbs Tangents Psychedelic Soul, Jah Wobble's Epiphany Barbara Morgenstern Thomas Lehn

204 **Tortoise** The Primer The Residents, Secret Museum of Mankind Bob Ostertag Gary Lucas's Jukebox Lesser, Peaches Japanorama live

205 **Talvin Singh** Ornette Coleman Phill Niblock Stephen Malkmus's Jukebox Tangents The Blank Generation Thighpaulsandra John Wall Future Pilot AKA

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207 **Geeerative Music** (Oval Eno Autechre, Evan Parker) Keith Tippett Tangents Sound Poetry Current 93's Jukebox Touch Bardo Pond Phil Cohran Hakan Lidbo

208 **Beyond Company Flow** (El-P Mr Len, Mr Lif Big Jus, Cannibal Ox) Neu! Fred Frith's Jukebox,The Primer Fire Music John Duncan Electrelane Scritti Politti

209 **Radiohead** MicroHouse (Vadislav Delay Jan Jelinek, Thomas Brinkmann) Pauline Oliveros's Jukebox,Tangents Metropolis & The Man Machine Arthur Doyle Jacques Attali FourTet John Hudak, Oren Ambarchi Chrome

210 **Acid Mothers Temple** The Primer Morton Feldman Laurie Anderson's Jukebox Fennesz Swedish Radicals (Rune Lindblad Öyvind Fahlström Ake Hodell, Folke Rabe Parson Sound) Prefuse 73 Hamid Drake

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213 **Jim O'Rourke** Kaija Saariaho Tangents The Soviet Noise Network Lol Coxhill's Jukebox,The View From Downtown (Lee Ranaldo Alan Licht, Stephen Vitiello and more), Bobby Conn Nagisa Ni te Manna Rosenfeld Patti Smith

214 **Mercury Rev** The Primer Music of Islam Cornelius Cardew Playgroup Kirk Degiorgio's Jukebox Madlib Axel Dorner Alog Station 17

215 **Le Tigre** 2001 Rewind (Records of the Year) Cabaret Voltaire Don Letts's Jukebox Badawi No Neck Blues Band Sand Zeitkratzer, John Cale Coil

216 **Richard Hell** Keith Rowe in Central Africa Tangents Music's lunatic fringe Joelle Léandre's Jukebox, Gary Lucas on Flonan Fricke Laub Fog Maxime De La Rochefoucauld, Lydia Lunch

217 **Sonic Youth special** (interview and Primer), Sam Rivers Steinski's Jukebox Sofa Musee Mecanique Christoll Migone Cex Thomas Buckner Bohman Brothers

218 **Alice Coltrane** Steve Beresford Tangents Bootlegs & Plagiarhythms Rebuilding Berlin Techno David Grubbs's Jukebox Taylor Deupree Vibracathedral Orchestra Sun Dj))) Jerry Hopkins on Frank Zappa

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220 **DJ Shadow** Frederic Rzewski The People Band Susie Ibarra Bernhard Gunter Super_Collider's Jukebox Murcof, Kjetil D Brandsdal The Sealed Knot

221 **Keiji Haino** The Primer Nurse With Wound John Coltrane, Wordsound, Philip Jeck Simon Fisher Turner's Jukebox, Goodiepal OJ /Rupture

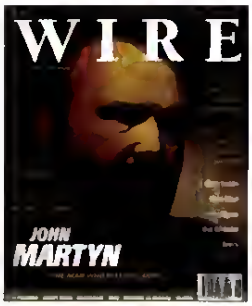
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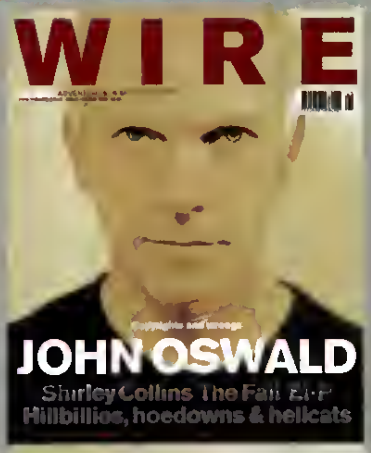
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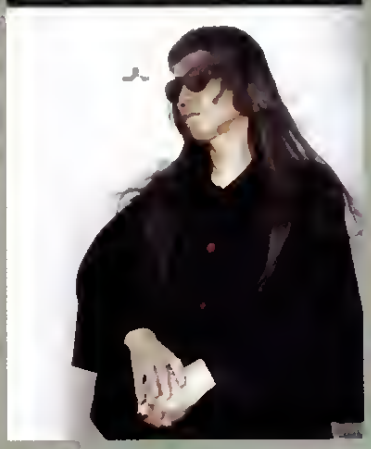
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CD 2
NURSE WITH WOUND "PFL (DEAMBULATION MIX)" **FAUST** "SO FAR (ALTERNATE)" **JOHN FAHEY** "DREAM OF THE ORIGIN OF THE FRENCH BROAD RIVER" **NILS OKLAND** "STRAUM" **COIL** "A COLD CELL" **JANEK SCHAEFER** "ACCIDENT ASSISTANT" **CURRENT NINETY THREE** "RED HAWTHORN TREE" **OJIVAN GASPARYAN** "NAZANI" **PEANUT BUTTER WOLF FEATURING RASCO** "RUN THE LINE (MARK 45 KING MIX)" **TSOUND** "FOLDED" **BITTONIC & BJ (CUT) DB** "RECYCLED 200" **C SCHULZ & HAJSCH** "6" **TOM RECCHION** "GENTLEWOMANLY GRACE" **PLURAMON** "SELF REMIX" **HERMAHH NITSCH** "NIGHT MUSIC (STRING QUINTETT) DAY & AUGUST & T&® 1 30 AM/DAY OF DIONYSUS IMPERATIVE EXCESS (DAY 3) EXTRACT AUGUST 5 1998 3:00 PM"

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FOUR TET "GLUE OF THE WORLD" **PULSEPROGRAMMING** "TO THE EXPERT EYE ALONE" **DANIEL FIGGIS** "DROOLS HOLDINGS/MUDDER THE LIGHT AGAIN" **TIN HI KIM** "EK FOR TC (EXCERPT)" **KIM HIORTHOY** "DET BLEV FEL" **ANTIBALAS AFROBEAT ORCHESTRA** "UPRISING" **BIGG TUS** "GAFFELING WHIPS" **HOLTE** "21ST CENTURY SCHIZOID MAN OR HOW TO LOSE YOUR HEAD BABY" **STEINBRUCHEL** "LOST THINGS WE FOUND BORROWED AT THE END OF LAST WEEK" **MICE PARADE** "INTO THE FREEDOM PART 3" **ILLUSION OF SAFETY** "STILLPOINT" **MONKS OF THE MONASTERY OF GYUTO** "TIBET" **LE GRAND NOIR (MAHAKALA) (EXCERPT)" RARDRUM** "UNTITLED" **LASSE MARHAUG** "POLAR" **MAX NAGL/EDWARD GOREY FEATURING JULIE TIPPETTS** "THE DISRESPECTFUL SUMMONS"

THE WIRE TAPPER 8
JANUARY 2002 ISSUE 215

23 SKIDOO "KUNDALINI" **TAH WOBBLE & TEMPLE OF SOUND** "SHOUT AT THE DEVIL" **CORNELIUS** "POINT OF VIEW POINT" **FOG** "PNEUMONIA" **GODDHRART ALLEN POWELL TRIO** "HARD COUNT" **CHAS SMITH** "GATE 5" **MITCHAEL JOH FINK** "ECHO" **MURCOF** "MO" **ELECTRELANE** "GAON EL" **RO NECK BLUES BAND** "THE NATURAL BRIDGE" **SET FIRE TO FLAMES** "OMAHA" **WORKSHOP** "FUR WEN?" **SMALL ROCKS** "CLODHOPPER" **THE RIP-OFF ARTIST** "STUFFING BOX" **NOXAGT** "POWERCHILD" **VARIOUS** "HELVITIS SYMPHONY NO 7 FOR 13 GUITARISTS (EXCERPT)" **XTHLI SUPREME** "KYORO"

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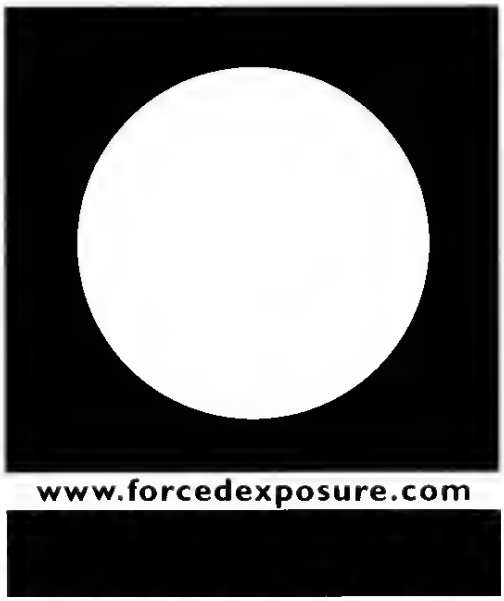
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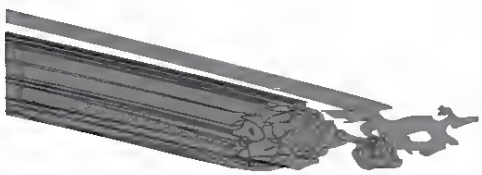
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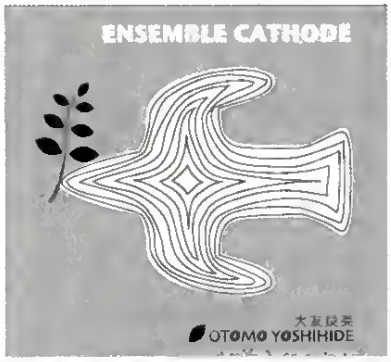
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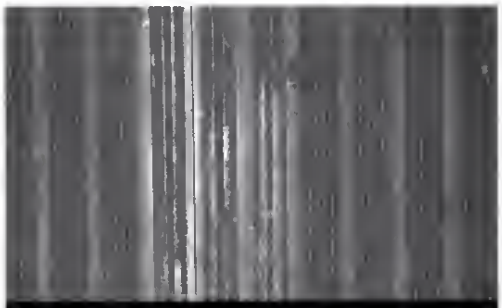
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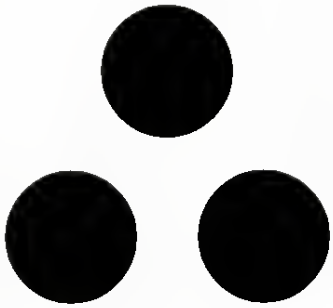
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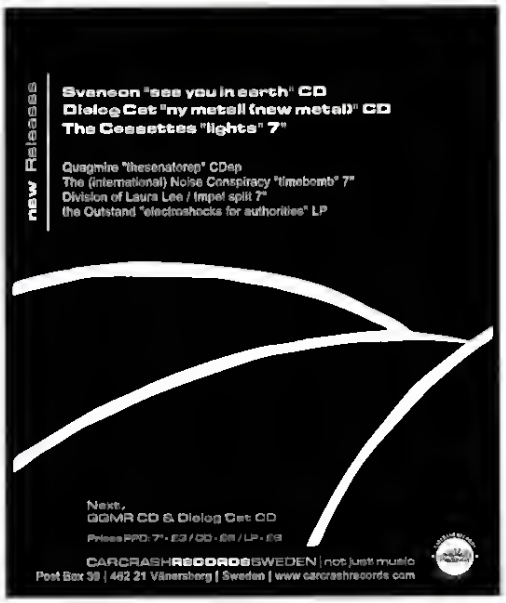
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Epiphanies



Punk may have been reduced to a teen angst soundtrack, but it created a virus that liberated Germany – specifically, the fiendish marriage of punk and electro that was DAF. By Biba Kopf

Kebab dreamers: DAF in 1980-81

The year punk broke I was off elsewhere, freewheeling through West Germany and fetching up in Frankfurt and Berlin. News from home arrived in two-week-old copies of *NME* and *Melody Maker*, which reported the escalating conflict with covar shots of cops shaking down The Sex Pistols in the street; Johnny Rotten's razored face; doughty townspeople turning back punk hordes... These images resounded with the exhilarating noise of individuals seizing the moment after glimpsing hitherto unimagined possibilities in the chaos of upheaval. In Germany, meanwhile, it was all quiet on the western front.

Back in the present, London's National Film Theatre has just screened a punk season to celebrate the 25th anniversary of The Sex Pistols' jubilee putsch, "God Save The Queen". Not being there first time around, here's a chance to discover what it was all about. Two lines into Jon Savage's programme note, I stumble over the phrase "teen-angst template" and crawl back into my own hole. Shackling it to such a cliched template sucks the punk moment dry of all the liberating possibilities it opened to those who seized it in the beginning. Reducing punk to a sociological imperative is the first step in its rehabilitation. Punk was already inching along this trajectory when I returned to the UK in autumn 1977, and witnessed its decline, its unrealised potential dribbled away by pantomime punks.

Meanwhile, the punk virus was spreading rapidly around the world, only beginning to truly flourish once it got out of earshot of Britain's hidebound ideologue. The virus hit Germany fast and hard in 1978. In Düsseldorf, it found willing hosts among the first generation to refuse their parents' burden of war guilt. Punk was always a handy way of shocking your elders, but in Düsseldorf, the virus soon evolved somewhat more intriguing strains. Raging through a relatively large youthful population of musicians, painters, pranksters and performance artists, it proliferated in ever more colourful hybrid and mutant forms. Of course, Düsseldorf had its three chord thrash ideologues too, but fortunately they didn't impede the development of the greatest song to coma out of German punk, "Kebabträume", translating as "Kebab Dreams". Variously performed by the numerous musicians with a songwriting claim on it, the definitive version was recorded as a single for Mute in 1980 by Deutsch-Amerikanische Freundschaft, aka DAF. The song first surfaced in 1979 as "Militurk", by pioneering punks Mittagspause. At this stage its churning slugrock does scant justice to its satirical lyrics, contributed by future DAF vocalist Gabi Delgado Lopez. When he founded DAF with Bavarian drummer Robert Görl, he brought along the "Militurk" words as his nest egg. After several line-up changes, they recorded their debut, *Ein Produkt Der...*, as an instrumental set while the vocalist was off pursuing a love affair. When he returned, DAF temporarily settled into an electrifying five piece, featuring Lopez, drummer Görl, guitarist Wolfgang Spelmanns, who shunned chords and notes for shrieking feedback and booming sonic depth charges wrestled or thumped from his guitar's body; Chrislo Haas, on electronics, and bass player Michael Kemner, who left shortly after "Kebabträume".

Driven by Görl and Lopez's overriding ambition, DAF arrogantly but not inaccurately believed they were several cuts above the rest. For Lopez, punk was never a democratic impulse, it was a licence to fulfil his desires with whatever means necessary. DAF were punk continued by electronic means. Electronics were always fairly prominent in Düsseldorf, whose artists were influenced by American avantists like Devo, Residents, Pere Ubu and No Wave, as well as UK punk. For DAF, the breakthrough came when Görl and Haas linked a sequencer to a Korg synthesizer.

To advance their career, the group moved to England in 1979, at first living rough five to a room and surviving on a pack of chips each per day. Kemner soon quit, but the others carried on nurturing and honing an astonishingly virulent hybrid of mutant hardcore, incorporating electro sequences as unpredictable as livewires flailing in a storm, reverberant guitar noise and simple, parade-ground drums. For the all their invigorating chaos live, DAF were already moving towards the cool yet insistent and precisely sequenced sex machine music of the Lopez-Görl duo that made DAF crossover stars in 80s Germany. Their developing poise shows in the midtempo pacing of the "Kebabträume" recording. Constructed around an unsprung sequencer riff, ruptured with random attacks of guitar and electronic noise, Lopez's mercilessly funny lyric savages the German bourgeoisie's twin fears of Turkish immigrants and communist spies, locking them in a Berlin Walled City scenario where the mounting paranoia peaks with a shrieked inversion of the German national anthem ("*Germany, Germany, it's all over*"), before dropping into a resigned whisper: *"We are the Turks of tomorrow"*.

Finely dovetailing sequencer, electronics and noise with an economic narrative, "Kebabträume" is a fabulously rare hybrid of hardcore punk and hardcore electro. Mesmerised by the boundless potential of sequenced electronics indicated by that single, Chrislo Haas soon left DAF to go chase loops like he was trying to catch a salmon by the tail. He gave notice of an extraordinary future with the 1982 electronica noir album, *Liaisons Dangereuses*, whose entwined saquencer motifs and sampled and syncopated percussion rhythms laid down an early Techno grid. A few desultory Techno discs and the odd guest appearance notwithstanding, he has never properly followed it up. Locking himself away with his sequencers and machines in a barely furnished warehouse in Berlin's Kreuzberg, he spent weeks, months, years speeding through sequencer combinations until he and his machines were both so exhausted they called it a draw

And the moral of the story is: be it punk riff or sample, loops make poor pets. Get out more. □

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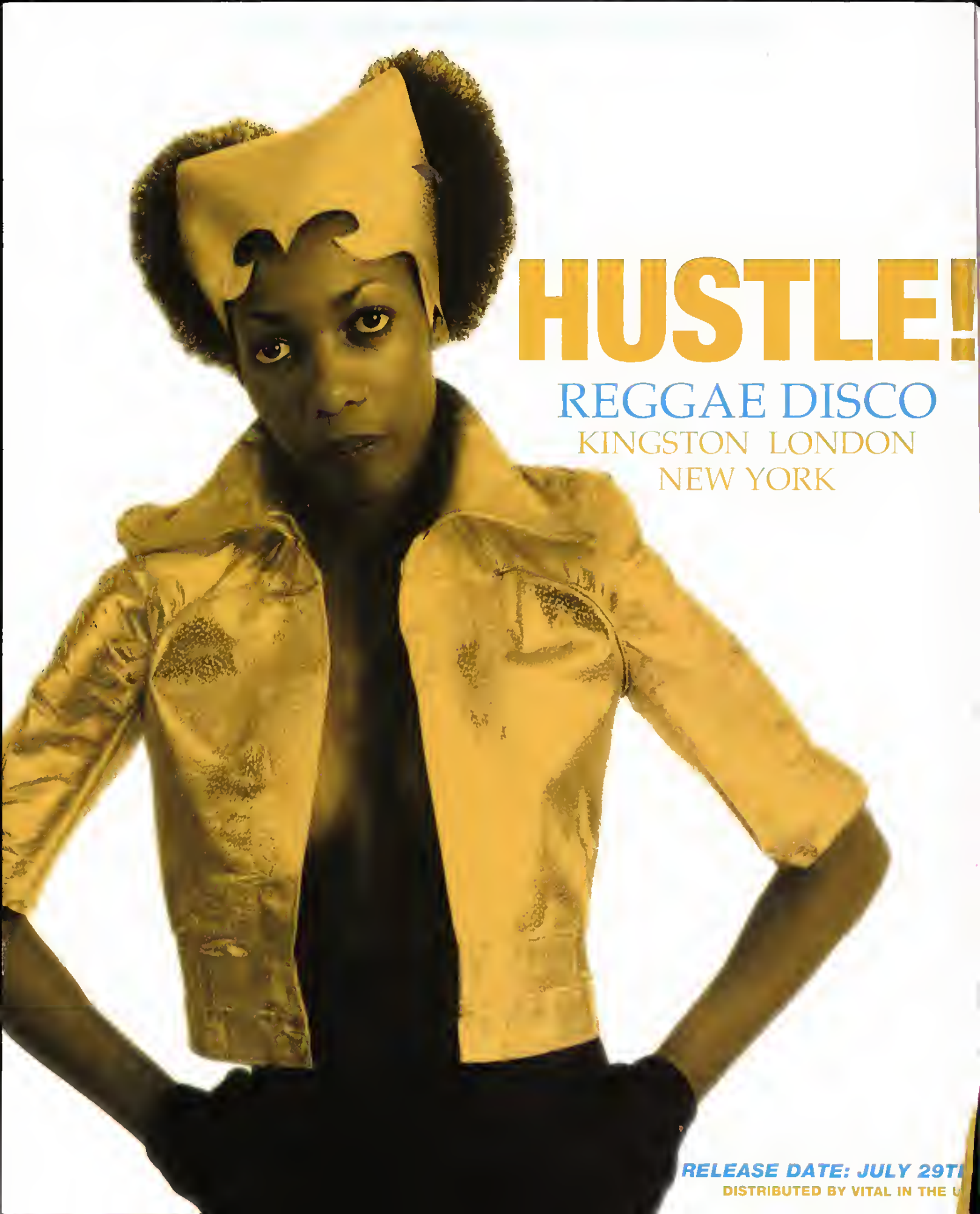


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